Contributions by **Winifred Barnes, Jessie Pope, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, K.C.B., William Le Queux, Owen Oliver, "Taffrail," Booth Tarkington, Etc.**

The Xmas

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(See Page 180.)

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PILLS

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Photo *Rita Martin.*

If *your* idea of Christmas is anything like that of Miss Winifred Barnes', it will include a hamper or parcel for someone at the Front. On page 91 this charming young actress gives you *her* ideas for a war-time Christmas. You can't do better than copy them!

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Photo *Pita Martin.*

Miss Winifred Barnes, who has delighted so many audiences in recent productions at Daly's Theatre.

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MY IDEA OF CHRISTMAS

By

Winifred Barnes

Should Christmas in war-time be shorn of its usual festivities? This is a question that many people will ponder over this year? In the following article Miss Winifred Barnes, the beautiful young actress, contends that for the sake of our fighting men, and the children to whom Christmas means so much, we should do our best to make this war-time Christmas a very happy one.

If wishes were horses, then beggars might ride—so the old-time saying tells us. And if wishes came true in the year 1916, it would need an army of horses to carry us through the things we want to do, on and before Christmas Day.

A war-time Christmas! That's what we have to face; that's what we have to enjoy. For I don't see why Christmas in war-time should not be enjoyed almost as much as any other feast of Noël, when guns cease to bark and soldiers fight no more. In fact, I think we should try to enjoy ourselves all the more, although our hearts are heavy, even though our enjoyment is just a reflected thing, and comes from the pleasure we are able to give to others.

Christmas is for children first and foremost. So why should the kiddies be made unhappy? Why should they see sad faces, and be met with such grim remarks as "No Christmas-tree, no stockings no romps this year. It's war-time, children!"

Of course it's war-time, and the children know it as well as we do.

Photo R. Martin.

Miss Barnes' Christmas shopping is an extensive business, for there are parcels for the Front to consider as well as the kiddies' stockings.

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So don't you think it's our special duty to give the children the finest Christmas we can, just to help them forget, and make the memory of war-days less bitter for them in years to come?

Later on, when Christmas comes round, those children ought to look back on war-time Christmases and remember, with happy smiles, that Mummy and other folks laughed and romped and helped to "celebrate," and drank the health of "Somebody—Somewhere" with shining eyes, over the turkey and stuffing!

Don't let them look back on gloom and sadness. We are on the road to victory, so let this—perhaps our last war-time Christmas—be the jolliest day imaginable.

After the children, Christmas is for the sick, the maimed, and the dwellers in far countries who think of Home as they eat their plum-pudding under a burning sun. Must they be forgotten because we are at war? Surely not, with the hospitals fuller than ever before, with men fighting and suffering, close at hand or far away, and thinking of the people in England

Photos *Rita Martin.*

"Our soldiers and sailors must not go short of Christmas puddings," says Miss Winifred Barnes, who recommends seven stirs for luck, and——

——reminds us that a muffler to keep "somebody's" throat warm is sure to be welcome.

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Choosing presents is a fascinating task in Miss Barnes' opinion, while no less delightful is——

Photos Rita Martin.
——the packing of a hamper for "someone in France," whose only bit of Christmas it may be.

on the day of peace and goodwill that turns the whole world into one vast brotherhood.

The other afternoon, sitting by the fire, knitting something to keep "someone's" throat warm, I was planning my ideal Christmas, and wishing, oh! so hard, that I had a hundred hands, a hundred feet, a hundred brains, coupled with the capability of being in several places at the same time, so that I could do all I longed to do at Christmastime. And then, still knitting mechanically, I began to plan in my mind *my* idea of Christmas!

"Come and stir the pudding!" an insistent voice sounded in my mind from the regions of the kitchen. So down I went, and there discovered a big check apron, a big wooden spoon, and a big basin full of some scrumptious mixture that smelt of currants and spice and—was it brandy? Seven stirs for luck, full of thoughts of the people who would eat plum-pudding on Christmas Day far away from home. I couldn't help hoping that many puddings would find their way into the trenches or aboard those great grey ships on the sea.

In tins or basins, however they come, these reminders of home are welcome, and I pictured some well-contented Tommy or Jack growling at his messmates, in paraphrase of the

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Photos *Rita Martin*

Miss Winifred Barnes puts in a plea for Christmas trees as usual, and suggests that signed photographs are always welcome as Christmas gifts.

popular saying: "Well, if you knows of a better pudding, go to it! And I wishes you joy!" as a snappy afterthought.

Not only fighting men, but England's exiles want some plum-pudding on Christmas Day. Our own folk, far away, like to forget the heat and the flies, and the need for iced drinks, and picture snow-bound England, of traditional Christmas-card type, revelling in the wintry delights of Christmas! So, whatever you do, remember to make lots of plum-puddings.

As for shopping—why, whole days are not enough; days without any break, except for a hurried lunch, spent studying minute pencilled lists and wondering if Cousin Jack would like a treasury note-case instead of a Red Indian outfit, as there's been rather a run on Red Indians this season, and the patient girl in the toy department has explained gently that they are "sold out." Then back again to the counter, to puzzle out the suitability of different things for different people.

With parcels hanging from every finger, not a bit tired, only rather sorry that shopping time is over, we reach home again. There's a regular commotion in the hall, which is full of hampers in a bulging row, piles of tins, odd-shaped packages, and shavings and sheets of newspaper.

"The carrier will be here for the hampers soon, so hurry up," comes a warning injunction. What fun! Down we go on our marrow-bones, packing, sorting, cramming all sorts of packets into a small space.

"Just hand over those cigarettes and the soap, please! This is for someone in France—oh, and let's put that odd duck on the top and a sprig of holly for luck. Do for the plum-pudding, p'raps. Some more shavings, please—that's done! Now this one—where's it going? Oh, I know! Those kiddies in the country whose father's away fighting; money's very short this year. Let's put in lots of sweets and biscuits and some crackers—yes, there's heaps of room!"

The hampers packed and ready, fixing up parcels begins. What a jolly game it is! There's something for everyone,

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'specially those people who may be overlooked by busy Mr. Santa Claus. There's a warm scarf for a plucky little war-widow who has to do such a lot of scrubbing and washing now her husband has given his life for his country. But she's managed to save some pennies for a tiny Christmas-tree for the children, and they can't give her anything, because even pennies are precious nowadays.

"I want to keep Christmas for them," she says, "same as we did when their Dad was alive. Christmas is for the children, ain't it, miss? and, Lor' bless you, a little bit of a tree pleases them quite a lot, to be sure!"

There's a little gift—such a tiny remembrance—for the rich old man, so lonely and unloved, who spends money galore on distant relatives, and gets nothing in return—not even a kind thought. We give to the very poor when we can, but forget the very rich—and they are often worse off for presents and remembrances than anyone.

"What *can* we give Uncle John?" his relations inquire crossly. "He's so rich—he's got everything!" So they accept his gifts, and give nothing. And all he wants is just the kind thought behind the tiniest gift—a hint of goodwill and good wishes on the great day of goodwill to all mankind. I expect *you* know many an Uncle John, who may wake on Christmas morning to find no good wishes and no gifts. Don't let that happen; it should never be allowed according to my idea of Christmas.

Signing photographs is another part of my Christmas programme—signing them, packing them up, and hurrying out to dispatch them on their journey far and wide, with the jingling of old Santa Claus' sleigh-bells to cheer them on their way and make their message of remembrance all the sweeter.

Up in my room a whole row of long black

Photos Rita Martin.

Our gallant wounded need entertaining at Christmas more than at any other time, and Miss Winifred Barnes—

—enjoys nothing better than brightening up a hospital ward by singing the songs they love.

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Photo *Ellis Martin*

"I loved my great, big Christmas stocking," confesses Miss Winifred Barnes, who begs that the children's belief in Santa Claus shall not be shattered by empty stockings.

stockings is hung out invitingly. It's a broad hint, and I wonder where the young demons who have made this display found these weapons of offence. Still, I loved my great, big Christmas stocking, on chilly, thrilling December mornings when I was a child. Bend down a minute while I whisper—I love it still; only grown-ups are supposed to be satisfied with ordinary parcels, brought by the postman in the ordinary way. I think it's rather a pity personally; but it's no good saying anything, I suppose.

It's a great joy to fill those stockings. A big orange goes in the toe of each, then something crackly in pretty paper, then some toys, then a trumpet, then some sweets—all the most indigestible things imaginable that may be eaten before breakfast hurriedly, and with great enjoyment. Last of all, a cracker is pinned across the top of the odd-looking black package. Then comes a long wait till bedtime is near, and a dressing-gown together with soft slippers make a queer version of Santa Claus. This is the time to tiptoe into quiet rooms with whispered prayers that nobody will wake. And if, when the door is closed, an excited head shoots up from a pillow, eager eyes will soon see that bulky outline against the bed-rail.

Before this happens, though, there is the Christmas-tree to decorate, with everyone helping or hindering, to the best of their ability. Busy people who imagine they are putting up decorations will insist upon borrowing string or pins, or paper, which are badly needed for the tree. Parcels are tied on—and fall off: candles refuse to remain upright, tinselled paper twines round the branches, and snaps off. But at last it is finished. The holly is in the hall, the mistletoe is ready, the last candle is on the tree, and a cheeky, fluffy yellow duck is perched on the topmost branch in insolent glory. Then up goes the protecting sheet, and all is ready for the great day.

And on Christmas Day itself—a hurried meal, and then we're off to a hospital, the first of many. Up in a big ward rows and rows of beds full of smiling fighting men, most of them playing with absurd Christmas toys. Jolly voices calling from bed to bed, heaps of gay decorations; happy laughter—in fact, a real representation of Christmas as it ought to be. And this, please note, in an atmosphere of pain and suffering. At the end of the ward, by a piano, is a small platform; and here we stand—those who are privileged to amuse the fighting men—and sing the merriest songs we know, ending up with something they can all sing when the chorus comes round.

And that, if you please, is *my* idea of Christmas!

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A NAVAL CHRISTMAS

by "Taffrail"

As a writer of naval sketches "Taffrail" has few equals, for he paints the life on our warships with a sure and intimate touch. The following sketch, which gives a vivid picture of Christmas on board a destroyer, has all the charm and breeziness that made his books—"Carry On!" and "Stand By!"—so popular.

I.

THERE came an elephantine tread on the thin steel deck overhead, followed by the thud of sea-booted feet and the rustle of an oilskin as someone descended the steep ladder outside. Then the Able-Seaman doing duty as quartermaster of the morning watch stubbed his toe in the darkness against the low coaming of the doorway, and, with a crash and a muffled remark which sounded suspiciously like a curse, clutched wildly at the curtain and pitched heavily on his hands and knees into his commanding officer's cabin.

It was an entirely novel and unpremeditated method of calling his Captain. It was one calculated to rouse that officer's ire in the early hours of the morning; but, for all that, it was highly efficacious, for the occupant of the bunk woke up with a start.

"Who the deuce is that?" he demanded testily.

"It's me, sir," said the man, picking himself up with a scraped shin.

"Who is me?" queried Carnforth, stretching out a hand, switching on the electric light, and sitting up. "And why on earth d'you want to come tumbling into my cabin like an acrobat?"

"I'm sorry, sir. I fell in the dark. I'm the quartermaster of the watch."

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"So I see. Please remove that beastly contrivance of yours from my new carpet." The officer pointed an accusing finger at the capsized lantern, which, guttering fiercely, was rapidly impregnating the atmosphere with evil-smelling smoke and his precious carpet with candle-grease.

The A.B. rescued the offending thing and retired to the lobby outside lest the rivulets of water from his oilskin should do further damage. "It's a quarter-past six, sir," he said.

The Lieutenant-Commander grunted and drew the bed-clothes up to his chin.

"What's the weather?" he asked, shivering. The steady drumming of the rain on the deck over his head and the state of the seaman's oilskin and sou'wester warned him what answer to expect.

"It's very cold, sir, and it's bin rainin' 'ard ever since I come on watch at four o'clock."

The C.O. groaned. "Any wind?"

"Nothin' to speak of at present, sir," said the man. "But the glass is goin' down fast." He said it almost as if he expected the skipper to be disappointed unless he could hold out some prospect of a gale.

"Humph! Sounds cheerful! Well, tell my servant I should like a cup of cocoa as soon as possible, and warn the First-Lieutenant we shall be sailing punctually at seven o'clock."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

Five minutes later Carnforth clambered wearily from his warm bunk, swallowed his cup of cocoa, and, having shaved, bathed, and attired himself in a variety of woollen garments, with sea-boots, oilskin, and sou'wester on top of everything to keep out the wet, climbed laboriously up the ladder leading to the deck and went forward to the bridge.

"Good-morning, sir," said the Sub-Lieutenant, who, with the water running in streams off his mackintosh, was busy wringing a sodden muffler. "A happy Christmas, sir!"

"Christmas!" echoed the skipper in surprise. "Lord! I clean forgot it. The same to you. I don't think very much of your weather, though."

"No, sir," the Sub agreed glumly. "This beastly rain is the limit, and, unless I'm mistaken, we shall have a blow before the afternoon. The glass has gone down with a thump since midnight."

"You're a cheerful sort of fellow to have in a ship, Sub," the Captain observed, glancing overhead at the leaden sky. "Why not say we shall have a fog as well, you Job's comforter?"

"I shouldn't at all wonder if **we did, sir,**" replied the young officer, who, having browsed through all the books on the subject he could find, rather prided himself on his knowledge of meteorology.

The Lieutenant-Commander laughed and moved to the fore side of the bridge. "Are you all ready?" he hailed.

"All ready, sir."

"Let go!"

The end of the wire slip-rope dropped into the water with a splash, and the men on the forecastle hauled in the free end through the ring of the buoy.

"Helm hard a' port! Half ahead port! Half astern starboard!"

The Coxswain moved his wheel, the engine-room reply gongs jangled, and the destroyer began to turn slowly on her heel, and a few minutes later was threading her way down the sluggish North country river towards the open sea.

So this was Christmas Day, Carnforth thought to himself, watching the dim outline of the rain-shrouded shore go sliding by on either side. "Peace on earth and goodwill towards men," and here they were in the midst of the most unholy war the world had ever known.

The war itself did not worry him very much. He had long since become accustomed to its vicissitudes; in fact, if the Huns thought fit to put up a Christmas Day "stunt" for his especial benefit, he would be only too pleased to join in and help them to celebrate it. But the torrents of rain, the cold, and the prospect of a snorting gale of wind or thick fog were by no means so pleasing, particularly before breakfast, when folk are apt to be peevish.

A year ago he had been serving in the *Poseidon*, one of the battleships of the Grand Fleet, and, although their Christmas on board had not been quite so festive as it was in the ordinary times of peace, they had managed to enjoy themselves. They happened to be in harbour at the time, and he well remembered how holly, for decorative purposes, had been scarcely obtainable, and how foraging parties had been ashore on Christmas Eve and had scoured the bleak, inhospitable terrain of their far northern base for greenery. The search was hardly successful, and the men had returned to the ship with a strange assortment of vegetation, amongst the consignment being several laurel bushes obviously dragged out by the roots from some long-suffering person's front garden.

But with this, coloured paper chains sent from their homes, signal flags borrowed from the bridge, photographs of wives, sweethearts, relations, and friends, and anything else their

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ready wit and nimble fingers could devise and manufacture, the ship's company of the battleship had managed to give the mess-deck something of a Christmassy appearance.

The wardroom, its white enamelled bulkheads having been scraped to the bare steel lest a bursting shell should start a conflagration, and all its pictures removed and stowed out of harm's way, looked rather more bare, for it had nothing but some of the precious holly in a vase on the table, and a large bunch of mistletoe suspended in a conspicuous position just inside the door. It had been sent by some officer's best girl, but though the Staff Surgeon had spent the greater portion of the forenoon in enticing his messmates to "come and be kissed," his only victim was the Padre, who, unsuspectingly placing himself beneath the mistletoe, found himself deftly saluted on either cheek before he had time to escape.

But what they had lacked in the way of decoration, officers and men had more than made up for in the way of food and "smokes." A steady stream of plum puddings, fruit, cakes, sweets, crackers, pipes, tobacco, and cigarettes had been gravitating towards the ship for the past fortnight. A few turkeys, some geese, hams, and a ripe Stilton cheese, consigned to the junior watchkeeper, had joined the merry throng; so, what with these and other comestibles obtained from the canteen, every soul on board had had quite enough to celebrate the day satisfactorily.

Carnforth rather sighed for the fleshpots and creature comforts of a battleship, for his former shipmates in the *Poseidon* would probably be celebrating Christmas Day in their usual festive manner if the ship were in harbour, while he would be at sea in his destroyer in what promised to be tolerably vile weather. Moreover, he would be subject to the tender mercies of a seasick officer's steward, who, having been an ostler before the war, hardly knew the pantry sink from an oven, or a beefsteak from a leg of mutton.

But if he had been given the option of returning to the *Poseidon* he would have laughed and shaken his head. He had served for a long time in destroyers before, and had only been sent to a battleship for eighteen months to keep in touch with the affairs of the larger Navy. The comfort of a big ship was all very well, while it was certainly very pleasant to have a lot of messmates; but all the time he had felt a comparative nonentity or "dog's body," for so many of the officers on board were senior to him. The command of a destroyer was something totally different, for there he was the captain of his own little ship.

Eleven o'clock found the *Merlin* well to the southward. The rain had cleared off, but, true to the Sub's dismal forebodings, it was blowing hard from the eastward, with the usual concomitant of a short, sharp little sea. The waves themselves were not really big enough to make the motion excessive, but, as the ship was driving along at something over twenty knots, it was uncomfortably wet, for she kicked up a perpetual shower of spray, which flew in liquid sheets over her bridge and deck.

The noses and fingers of those officers and men who happened to be on watch were blue and numb with the cold, and they could feel the icy water slowly percolating through their woollen mufflers and down their backs until it finally came to rest in the bottom of their sea-boots.

"I'm 'arf drownded!" spluttered a young Able-Seaman, fresh from a big ship. "Is it always like this 'ere?"

"Got a bleat, 'ave yer?" growled an unsympathetic Petty Officer. "This 'ere ain't nothin' to wot you'll 'ave when the seas starts comin' over green. This 'ere's fine weather. Some o' you blokes must 'a' joined th' Navy to get wrapped in cotton-wool if you're frightened o' getting wet wi' a drop o' salt water!" He said it with such bitter emphasis and contempt that the youngster felt rather ashamed of himself.

The watch below seemed to spend the greater portion of the forenoon in harmony for the band—so called by the performers themselves, and consisting of a concertina, several mouth-organs, a tin whistle, with a tympani accompaniment, hammered out on the bottom of a mess-kettle with two spoons—disported itself in the shelter abaft the forecastle. Their rendering of "Noël," entirely from memory, was anything but musical, but the well-worn "Tipperary" and "'Oo's yer lady friend?" were received with great applause, while a sentimental ballad of eleven verses, entitled "The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter," seemed intensely popular.

Shortly after noon the steward, with the inevitable napkin over one arm, appeared on the bridge to inform Carnforth that his lunch was ready in the charthouse.

"Have you nothing hot?" the skipper asked, going below and eyeing a small plate of cold ham and pickles. "Is this all you have? D'you realise this is Christmas Day?"

"Yessir; but it's very nice 'am, sir. Should I boil you a hegg, sir?"

"You'd better boil me four eggs, if you've got nothing else. You seem to imagine I've got the appetite of a canary!"

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"I'm sorry, sir. I didn't know you were a 'eavy eater, sir."

"Oh, didn't you?" snorted the skipper. "Well, go and see to those eggs, and be quick about it."

It was not the least use being angry with the steward, for he meant well, and, after all, what could one expect from an ostler? One thing the wardroom officers were quite certain about, however, was that they would dispense with his services on the first opportunity, for if his *régime* were suffered to continue, they would soon become reduced to mere skeletons.

The eggs duly arrived, and Carnforth had just demolished the third when the bridge messenger put his head in through the chart-house door.

"The orficer o' the watch sez it's comin' on to snow, sir, an' gettin' a bit thick," he announced.

It was perfectly true, for when the skipper arrived on the bridge a couple of seconds later the flakes were falling fast, and the visibility had been reduced to a mile. Ten minutes later it was snowing really hard, and they could barely see two hundred yards.

"This *is* the limit!" he muttered disgustedly to the First-Lieutenant, moving to the engine-room telegraph and ringing down the revolutions for ten knots. "Luckily we know exactly whereabouts we are, but a few miles further on we have to pick up those buoys and dodge the Hun minefields." He put a finger on the chart and pointed out a dangerous-looking area outlined in red.

"Yes," agreed Number One. "It's a nasty place to get caught in. However, sir, if we keep our sounding machine going regularly I've no doubt we'll worry through somehow. We ought to make that first buoy before very long."

With the reduction of speed the shower of spray ceased, and the little ship crawled slowly on with extra look-outs peering ahead from her forecastle, and her sounding machine going every five minutes. The depth of the water was a valuable guide as to position, for Carnforth knew that so long as they got nothing less than ten fathoms it was quite impossible for them to run ashore. But no sounding machine on this earth could inform them if they blundered into the midst of the newly-sown minefield, in which, according to the latest information, no less than three steamers, one British and two neutrals, had been blown up within the past few days.

Before the snow came down and blotted out everything there had hardly been a vessel in sight, but now that it was really thick the sea seemed suddenly full of ships. They did not come in ones, twos, or threes; they came in shoals of a dozen or so at a time, and the frenzied, agitated booming and yelping of their whistles and syrens sounded from all directions at the same moment. Once a dim black blur appeared in the murk right ahead. There came a yell from the destroyer's forecastle, and Carnforth, his heart in his mouth, howled out an order to the quartermaster at the wheel.

It was only just in time, for the *Merlin*, swinging abruptly to starboard, slithered by the tall sides of a North-country collier tramp.

"Hey, you man o' war, there!" somebody yelled from her bridge. "Port yer hellum! Port yer hellum!"

"Port yer hellum, an' git yer ruddy 'air cut, yer ole pirate!" mimicked some wag from the *Merlin's* upper deck.

A red-faced, hairy-looking man in the tramp waved his hand and laughed, but before further conversation was possible the two vessels were clear of each other. It was a close shave, and by no means the only one the *Merlin* had that afternoon; but a miss is ever as good as a mile, and the little cherub who sits up aloft usually seems to have a soft corner in his heart for those who go down to the sea in His Majesty's T.B.D's.

It was ten minutes after this incident that there came a sudden, roaring crash from somewhere on the port bow. The jarring thud sounded exactly as if the ship had struck something solid, and brought everyone tumbling on deck in an instant.

"Great Scott, what's that?" ejaculated the First-Lieutenant in one breath.

"A mine," said the skipper, who knew the sound of old. "It seemed to me to be fairly close. I wonder if——"

He never finished what he was going to say, for at that moment the blurred shape of a small vessel, plastered white with snow, slid slowly into sight on the port bow, and the destroyer, stopping her engines, moved towards her.

"Is anything the matter?" Carnforth hailed.

"Matter?" came back the reply. "No. Why d'you ask?"

"She's a mine-sweeper, sir," Number One broke in.

"So she is," muttered the skipper, rather relieved. "I thought I heard an explosion just now," he shouted.

An officer on the sweeper's bridge laughed. "I expect you did. I've just exploded a mine by rifle fire. A German mine with horns," he added.

"Is it all clear ahead?" Carnforth asked with some trepidation.

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At that moment the blurred shape of a small vessel, plastered white with snow, slid slowly into sight on the port bow . . . "Is anything the matter?" Carnforth hailed.

"Yes. You're quite all right, but you'd better go easy. You may come across a floater or two. Might sink 'em if you do. By the way——"

"Hullo?"

"If you see a Norwegian tramp called the *Emma* about a mile ahead you might tell him what I think of him. The dirty dog's scraped all the paint off my port side."

"I will," the Lieutenant-Commander laughed. "Any damage?"

"No. S'long! Good luck!"

"Same to you, and a Happy Christmas!"

flew back as the *Merlin* gathered headway.

"I *don't* think!" came a parting yell from the trawler as she disappeared astern.

"Lord!" Carnforth observed. "The more I see of those mine-sweepers the more I admire 'em. That chap seemed positively cheerful. How the deuce do they stick it?"

"Heaven only knows," said Number One.

Before long the snow ceased, and they were able to see a couple of miles. The buoy was duly sighted and passed, but a quarter-of-an-hour afterwards something did happen.

Several ships were in sight, and less than a mile ahead of the destroyer a small Swedish tramp was plodding slowly southward at her usual leisurely gait of nine knots. The *Merlin*, having increased speed, was overhauling her fast, when, all at once, a huge column of white water leapt suddenly into the air at the bows of the ungainly little cargo-carrier, and the deep, booming roar of a heavy explosion came travelling down wind.

"She's got it!" Carnforth muttered, holding his breath. "There is no mistaking a mine."

Hardly had the reverberating sound of the explosion come to their ears than the column of spray fell and cleared away. The little

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steamer's bows seemed to have dipped down into the water, while her stern had reared itself into the air until her rudder and propeller were both visible. She seemed to be sinking, for her crew were lowering what boats she possessed.

It was all over in less than five minutes, and by the time the *Merlin* arrived on the scene and started to lower her boats, the stricken ship's bows had dipped lower and lower, until at last the grey seas were breaking over her forecastle. There was no time to save anything, and hardly had the crew bundled into the boats and rowed clear than there came the dull boom of a bursting bulkhead. The tramp gave a sickening plunge, and, flinging her fore-part under water, hove her stern perpendicularly in the air.

She hung there for a moment, and then, with a low, gurgling hiss, a dense cloud of steam, and a rush of sparks and smoke from the funnel as the water reached her furnaces, she suddenly disappeared. When the vapour cleared away, nothing remained to tell of her former presence except an ever-widening patch of oily water, a mass of floating *débris*, and the boats rocking on the swell.

"Good Lord!" the skipper murmured, as he watched her vanish. "It might have been us!"

The survivors were embarked and provided with food and clothing, their crazy boats were cast adrift, and then the *Merlin* proceeded on her journey. From now on progress was comparatively easy, for all they had to do was to steer from one buoy to the next until they finally came to the lightship off the entrance to the harbour for which they were bound.

It was at about 6.45, by which time it was pitch-dark and still blowing hard, that they groped their way in, and twenty minutes later the anchor went down with a rattle of cable and the *Merlin* swung to the tide.

Carnforth went aft.

"I hope my people have done what they could for you?" he said, going to the tramp's skipper, who, with his men, was waiting at the gangway for the boat to take them ashore. "It was wretched hard luck."

"'Dey vas very goot," murmured the Swede. "'Dey gif' us 'dings to eat an' drink, an' plenty clothes." He waved a hand towards his crew, who were attired in all manner of strange garments given them by the bluejackets. "Bot my sheep," he added piteously, "I no' get heem back. I haf' lose every'sing, an' ven I go back home my owners vill be mos' angry, an' say eet vas my fault."

"Cheer up!" said Carnforth. "They can't possibly say that. After all, if the Germans lay mines all over the sea, what can one expect?

"'Dose 'Chamans ees peegs!" exclaimed the foreigner angrily. "'Dey ees vat you call goddam peegs! Dey are not gentlemen!"

Carnforth quite agreed.

III.

"Dinner is served, sir," said the steward, tapping discreetly at the door of the skipper's cabin.

"Right. I'll be there in a minute."

He finished washing his hands and climbed on deck. The snow had recommenced, and he stood for a moment watching it driving down in sheets, and gauging the strength and force of the wind, and then made his way aft to the wardroom.

"Cæsar's aunt!" he ejaculated, halting in the doorway in utter astonishment. "What the deuce has happened here?"

The mess was quite transformed. The table was spread with a clean white cloth, decorated with crackers and sprigs of red-berried holly; wreaths and festoons of holly and evergreen hung from the lamp brackets and ceiling, while on the far bulkhead an enormous bunch of mistletoe surmounted a home-made motto, "A Happy Xmas to Us All," emblazoned in red and black on the back of an old chart.

"We thought you'd be surprised, sir," laughed Number One.

"I am, profoundly surprised. But I wish you'd tell me what's been going on."

"I had a hamper sent me a couple of days ago, sir," the Sub explained, half apologetically. "I told my people I was rapidly fading away, and this is the result." He waved a hand towards the table and smiled.

"But we're not only going to pull crackers and admire the decorations," observed the Engineer-Lieutenant-Commander. "There are oysters, an E-normous turkey, a plum pudding, and a mountain of mince pies. Also almonds and raisins, and all the usual fallals. We shall have the time of our lives, and devilled turkey legs for breakfast tomorrow. I think the Sub deserves the freedom of the City at the very least."

"I quite agree, Chief," said the skipper. "But who says a glass of sherry to start the show?"

They all did.

Carnforth lifted his glass. "Well," he said, "here's luck to us all and the old *Merlin*, and may the shadows of the Sub's mother and father never grow less."

"Beg pardon," interrupted the steward, "but will you 'ave the 'hoysters now or hafter the sweet?"

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PARSONS' WIVES

By Christine Jope-Slade.

"Fond of fun,
And fond of dress, and change and praise,
So mere a woman in her ways."

The bell was ringing for evening service when she nodded good-night to the station-master and started down the dusty hill hugging her parcels to her. the string of some of them twined agonisingly tightly round her hot, cotton-gloved fingers.

"Been shopping, Mrs. Benny?"

She nodded, smiling mechanically, conscious of the drops of perspiration beading her face, the dust and smuts that had gathered since her midday wash at the big West End shop.

"London very gay?" There was that note of subtle, half-unconscious disparagement in the speaker's voice that irritated her, fresh weaned from the summery gaiety of Oxford Street shops, the flowery opulence of the afternoon's peep at the glories of Hyde Park. "I expect you're glad to be back," and the voice was full of comfortable assurance. "You'll want your supper. Good-night, Mrs. Benny."

Why should they

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conclude that she was satisfied, pleased to live in an ugly, shabby little home in a village where the Sunday papers never arrived till midday?

She wondered what would happen if she suddenly unbuttoned her tight little heart, revealed shamelessly her lust for pretty, worldly things, her cravings for London gaiety and noise and rush, her passion for light, dainty fabrics, for rich, glowing colours, her desire for the hairdresser's and the manicurist's aid, for music, for the restless exhilaration of smart restaurants.

She grew hot and nervy at the thought of the blank incomprehension, the absolute amazement that would meet her in her own home.

For twenty-four long years of tea-parties, shabbiness, hard work, home-making, and housekeeping on a cruelly inadequate stipend she had hidden this wicked lust for prettiness and culture and brightness. It lurked unsuspected in her heart; it fed itself surreptitiously on women's sixpenny papers lent her by summer visitors to the Grange and the Manor, and twice yearly on her shopping expeditions to London it erupted fiercely, horribly.

Secretly she regarded it as a loathsome and terrible weakness. In the intervals between her visits to the metropolis she sometimes dared to deem it dead; but when she rose at six to catch the train, she knew, even as she dressed silently to avoid waking her husband, that it was there again, eating into her imagination, the wicked, uncontrollable imagination of a parson's wife.

Joy, her only daughter, had escaped the taint. Joy, dowered with health and boundless vitality, was utterly content. Joy had only been to London twice in her life, and she hated it; she was glad to be back in her shabby home, in the little town where Birth and Death were the only things that happened.

Round Joy's abundantly crowned head flitted her jaded mother's greatest dreams; her highest ambitions, her stifled, unvoiced desires found strength and flame; passionately, almost hysterically, in the shut-away silences of her own heart she coveted for Joy the things she had never possessed herself—the ease, the freedom from financial care, from the burden of eternal housework, washing, mending, and contriving.

Joy should have a pretty trousseau; Joy's baby should have a cot trimmed with dainty ribbons; Joy should know the pleasure of eating meals she had not ordered, of undarned stockings and unmended shoes.

She pushed open the gate of the parsonage with her knee.

The front door stood open, and as she crossed the threshold her husband came out of his study.

"Hot in town, my dear?" he asked kindly. "You look tired."

"I am rather," she confessed.

"There's some cold meat and salad and cheese in the dining-room. I let Erinshaw take service to-night; I've been with old Mrs. Biddulph all the afternoon. By the way, young Mrs. Biddulph wants to see you about those hospital shirts."

"Very well," she answered quietly. "Where's Joy?"

"In church. She went with the St. John's outing to-day. They were sorry you couldn't go, but I explained. I think Mrs. Graham thought it was rather a waste of money going to London to do your shopping."

"I could not get the things in Ellchester; besides, they are so expensive. I don't go often."

"I know, my dear, I know," he rejoined soothingly. "Shall I take your parcels while you go and have supper? You look fagged out."

"No, no, thank you," she said hastily. "I'll wash first, I think. I'm sorry about Mrs. Graham, but I think she might have minded her own business!"

He looked at her with faint surprise.

"She never does," he rejoined naively. "I don't see why you should mind, my dear; after all, she's a perfect right to express her opinion. Shall I tell Rose to make you a cup of tea?"

"No, thank you, John," she answered quietly, and went upstairs with her parcels.

She left them on her bed while she washed and had her supper, all except one, and that she locked in a drawer in the shabby mahogany chest, replacing the key on a slender chain round her neck.

She ate her meal in silence and alone, and it was tasteless in her dry mouth.

She stared out at the twilit garden and saw shops, shimmering with pink blouses, with cobwebby undergarments, with lace, with hats like little bits of summer gardens; above the song of the nightingale and the whir of the corncrake she heard, as if against her will, the roar of traffic, the sudden breaking through of a military march, the dulled tramping of feet, the little snatches of conversation; there came to her the odour of scent, the perfume of tired, heaped-up baskets of garden roses being offered by street vendors, the smell of coffee, food, dust, petrol; and it was not the metropolis itself her restless heart craved for, it was the essence and spirit of it, the air of luxury and ease.

She crumbled her bread with nervous

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fingers; then she gave up the pretence of eating, and went upstairs to unpack her parcels.

She laid them on her bed—the dish cloths, the green tablecloth, the flannel for her winter nightgowns, the casement cloth for the study windows, the toast-rack, the net to do up her old blouse, the tweed for Joy's autumn coat and skirt, the socks for her husband, the red bath mat.

Then she locked the door and went to the drawer where her last parcel lay, and opened it.

It was a pink *crêpe-de-Chine* camisole with ribbon shoulder-straps, a filmy affair trimmed with narrow lace and two true-lover's knots worked in pale pink and green ribbon.

It had cost a guinea.

She stroked it like a delighted child, felt its fine frailty; then she opened the drawer and laid it against a white *crêpe de-Chine* nightgown, a little mob-cap all roses and lace, a pink silk underskirt.

All these things had been bought at various times for Joy's trousseau. A delighted little shiver ran over her as she looked at them. They represented several pounds, skimped and saved, but they were things she could never, never have afforded all at once.

Joy should start her new life with the pretty things she had longed for; Joy should go to her husband clad like a little princess. Not for Joy the ceaseless struggle to make both ends meet, the dullness of life in a tiny village!

One day Joy would marry — marry well.

"Mother!"

She shut and locked the drawer; then she put her head out of the window.

"Yes, dear"

In the grey light she could see her girl's face like a tilted white flower.

"Can I come up a minute?"

"Do, dear."

II.

The slender figure in its white drill skirt was silhouetted a moment against the passage; then Joy shut the door and the two women were alone.

"No, don't light the candles, mummie; I want to talk to you."

The elder glanced up apprehensively.

"Did Rose spoil the dinner again to-day?"

"No—oh, no—it's—it's something quite different."

"Is it that young Saher again? If so, dear, turn him out of the class."

"No, it's not that."

Her mind was still clouded with pink *crêpe-de-Chine*, London, and dreams of the future. She spoke absently, seating herself in the wicker chair by the open window.

"I'm listening, dearest."

"Mummie—I—I'm so happy to-night."

"Was the service nice?"

"It—it was beautiful, dear, but—but it wasn't that."

The girl was sitting on the bed hugging the big knob of the rail to her heart.

"Well, dear?"

"It seemed so easy to tell you—when I was out there in the garden. Mr. Erinshaw is in the study with Daddie now."

Then she understood; that penniless, contented, healthy, honest young fellow!

"Oh, Joy!"

"He—he is poor, mummie, but—but he'll get on."

"He won't!" The truth was squeezed out of her. "He's like your father—too good."

"Isn't that—best of all?"

The mother sat very still, and watched her poor little rosy dreams take flight one by one.

She looked at Joy. There was a tense expectancy about the slim figure, a restrained youthful radiance. She knew that the girl was overflowing with emotion, waiting eagerly for her to make the first move, and let it come with a relieved rush, but she sat still and white, huddled in her chair, and mourned for her dreams as only a woman who has known few can mourn. So big they had been, so glowing, so heart-whole; they had found birth at her baby's cradle and all through life they had followed her, through boarding-school and adolescence, strengthening as the years went by.

Not for Joy the eternal struggle to make two and two into five! Not for Joy the carping of village critics, the bowing down to the local bigwigs and pew-renters! Not for Joy the monotony of classes and services! That had been her prayer.

"Parsons' wives have a hard life," she said jerkily. "When I was your age I felt like you do. I felt the greatness and grandeur of it all. I was earnest and enthusiastic then, but—parsons' wives have a hard time."

"Oh, mother! it's a beautiful life!"

"It seems like that when you start, Joy. You want to kiss every smelly little village baby and read to every cross old woman. It isn't the life; it's the lack of money—and——and the people. You're always like a child at school—the child who never has any pocket-money or any tuck—or—or a new dress."

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"Aren't they beautiful?" she queried eagerly. "Yes, mother, very." The girl's voice was troubled, so were her eyes. "Mother, didn't they—they cost a frightful lot?"

The girl was staring at her mother with something like horror in her clear eyes, but the elder woman went on desperately with her task of self-revelation.

"We manage on less than a mechanic's wife, and yet we are forced to keep up a position, to have servants; we are expected to be dowdy and shabby; people are offended if we are not. Joy—when I was first married, when I was a young bride, I thirsted for pretty things, and when you came it was worse. I—I would have stolen them for you."

"Mother!"

She looked at the girl drearily.

"You won't believe it."

"I love Maurice. I'd go to the ends of the earth with him."

The elder woman knew that all the forces of nature were arrayed against her. She knew the futility of battle. She crossed the room and pressed white lips to her daughter's forehead.

"You didn't mean that, mummie! You are glad! You like Maurice! Mother, he's so good, so noble—he—he——"

She put the clinging hands from her.

"I hope you will be very, very happy with him, dear," she said. Then she drew in her breath, and for one moment a smile dawned in her eyes.

"Joy—I—I got some of the things for—for your trousseau."

"But you didn't know!"

"I suppose it was fate made me buy them," she laughed nervously; "they—they were so pretty. Come and look at them."

Her hands trembled as she unlocked the drawer and took out her treasures. Joy had lit the candles. She put the underclothes on the bed between them, the fragile, worldly fruits of much self-sacrifice.

"Aren't they beautiful?" she queried eagerly.

"Yes, mother, very." The girl's voice

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was troubled, so were her eyes. "Mother, didn't they—they cost a frightful lot?"

"That camisole was a guinea!"

"A guinea! Mother—I—I don't want to seem ungrateful; please, please, I don't!" Her eyes were full of tears. "I—I think it would be wicked to—to spend all that. I—I'd rather make my own. I know I sound horrid and—and priggish—but, dear, you do understand?"

"But they are so pretty, Joy." She touched them with fascinated fingers.

"Yes, they are; but I shouldn't feel happy in them—knowing they cost all that; besides—are they quite suitable for—for a curate's wife?"

A queer little smile twisted the corners of her mother's mouth.

"No," she acquiesced; "perhaps you are right, Joy. They—they aren't suitable for a parson's wife."

"Joy!" It was the vicar's voice at the foot of the stairs. "Joy, I want you, my dear!"

The girl clung to her mother, trembling a little, her eyes shining and wonderful.

"Is your mother there?"

"Yes, Daddie."

"Tell her to come, too."

"Go, dear," said her mother gently.

She waited a minute to lock away the clothes and the dreams that were not for a parson's wife.

They have made the camisole into a bonnet for the baby Joy; one white *crêpe-de-Chine* nighty has fashioned three delicious *matinée* jackets.

"Mrs. Graham doesn't think you dress Joy quite suitably, dearest," ventures the young father.

"I think Mrs. Graham might keep her opinion to herself," snaps Joy, the mother.

"But she never does, dear, and, unfortunately, we are not in a position to protest."

All things move in circles. There is nothing new under the sun.

CHRISTMAS LEAVE.

I said: "If I get Christmas leave, why, cheero!
That week shall beat all other weeks to fits;
I'll take Jane teaing at the Trocadero,
I'll dine with Violetta at the Ritz,
I'll lunch with Kathleen at the Piccadilly,
The 'Petit Riche' shall welcome Sue and me;
I'll—well, I'll knock the Bond Street tea-shops silly;
I'll have *some* Christmas leave—the girls shall see;"

I've got my Christmas leave; you wouldn't guess it;
I'm in my club as hipped as I can be;
And bored to shrieks—I may as well confess it—
For Violette has joined the V.A.D.
And Kathleen's making shells—most base of wenches!—
And 'bus conductorettes are Jane and Sue.
I've *got* leave, but—it's lonelier than the trenches
Without the girls! Ugh!—what's a chap to do?

Ethel Talbot.

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CLUBLAND IN WAR-TIME.

By "A Club Secretary."

Nowhere has the war wrought greater havoc than in the West-End clubs, especially those frequented by younger men. In the following article the Secretary of a famous club describes the effects of the war on Clubland, and relates some amusing incidents that have come within his experience.

Clubland is suffering severely from the effects of the war.

A very large percentage of members of military age of almost every species of club, from the grim mausoleums of the West-End of London to local croquet clubs in the suburbs and provinces, have, for the time being, evacuated their one-time haunts to take up a more patriotic position elsewhere; and, alas, new members do not make their appearance. The secretary of probably nineteen clubs out of twenty will tell you that his particular establishment is in no danger just now of being overcrowded through an overwhelming invasion of newcomers.

Obviously those clubs, the majority of whose members have long since passed the age when they are able to offer their services to their country, are suffering less severely than clubs frequented by younger men, but the fact remains that most of the West-End clubs have experienced a depressing time, financially speaking, and as a result not a few of the best-known clubs in London are abolishing entrance fees and cutting down expenses.

Heavy allowances to employees on the staff who have enlisted, the suspension of the subscriptions of members who are on active service, the rise in the price of provisions, and the falling-off of the takings for late meals and alcoholic drinks are the main causes which have resulted in the doors of the club that the average man never hoped to enter now being opened to him if he will open his cheque-book.

Whether when the world is a real world again, and Armageddon has passed for ever, Clubland will ever regain its old-time independence and prestige must also be a matter for doubt, for the change which has taken place in our national habits within recent years, the coming into their own of golf clubs and motoring, and the all-round increasing popularity of the open-air life have, for many years past, been slowly but surely causing an ever-increasing retreat from the many dull, stodgy clubs which still thrive in London and the Provinces. These are actually—only they have probably not realised the fact—mere survivals of days and of social habits that are happily now almost forgotten; relics, in fine, of the time when men and women shared neither common interests nor comradeship, and when the fumes of tobacco smoke were, by force of custom, taboo in the presence of ladies.

As a general rule, the large clubs are the duller clubs. But, alas! the duller clubs have not been rendered the less dull in

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West-End clubs frequented by members who have long passed military age have not suffered so severely, but the war has taken heavy toll of those clubs dedicated to the younger men.

war-time, for the club bore still remains unchanged and invincible, a grim reminder of the days when a club for a woman was regarded as out of order, and a club for a man predominantly regarded by the said mere male as a refuge where he could enjoy the silence of his fellow-members.

You know the classic story, of course, of the club where it isn't etiquette for members to speak to each other? One afternoon a member of old standing turned casually to the gorgeous flunkey as he was leaving this "cheery" establishment, and remarked tersely:

"Kindly remove the member who is sitting in the arm-chair on the right-hand side of the fire-place in the library."

"I sincerely hope, sir," said that dignified ornament of the building "that the gentleman is not er-ahem—intoxicated?"

"Certainly not!" replied the member frigidly as he strolled to the door. "But I understand that he passed away some hours ago."

There is something extremely moving, too, in the experience of a new member of a club the name of which the average man used to utter with almost a tinge of reverence, who, on entering the smoking-room one day, accidentally trod on the foot of a fellow-member. He apologised profusely, when he noticed to his surprise that the owner of the foot was sobbing bitterly.

"I can't tell you how grieved I am at my careless clumsiness," said the new member as he sat down beside the weeping old gentleman. "I'm afraid I must have caused you the greatest pain—for I am a heavy man."

"By no means, sir," replied the old member to the newcomer. "You didn't hurt me at all. But please forgive my emotion. You see, I have belonged to this club for twenty-five years, and you are the first member who has spoken to me."

But if social clubs have been hard hit by the war, open-air clubs have surely been battered ten times the harder. Cricket, polo, boxing, tennis, racing, trotting, running, swimming, croquet clubs, in a word, all clubs devoted to games and open-air pastimes of all sorts have in every case given an enormous percentage of their members.

It was, I think, dear old "Bobs" who once said that polo was the finest possible training for war, especially for the cavalry soldier. And he cannot have been far wrong, as the brilliant record of gallantry of polo-players in the war proves.

Capt. Francis Grenfell, V.C., and poor "Rivy," hard, true hitters both of them, and past-masters of the fast-galloping game, loom large in the glorious record of polo-players in the war, while the records of such well-known polo regiments as the 15th Hussars, the 16th Lancers, and many others, will surely live for ever.

Members of the home of boxing in England, the National Sporting Club, have, it is scarcely necessary to say, literally flocked to join the colours, as have, indeed, many of the most popular drawing cards among boxers themselves—Billy Wells, Jim Driscoll, Pat O'Keefe, and Johnny Summers, to cite a few names at random.

Writing of boxing enthusiasts, by the way, reminds me that I heard only a few days ago a story typical of one of boxing's most devoted followers, who must be nameless, who was famed among his fellows for the dexterity with which he mixed a salad.

He was up at the club on leave a few days before he left for the Front, and was preparing one of his own pet particular salads

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Since the war some most exclusive clubs have relaxed their rules, and opened their doors to less aristocratic members on condition they, in turn, open their cheque-books.

for himself at luncheon, when a friend called to him:

"Jimmy," he said, "be a good fellow and mix me a salad, too."

"Certainly," replied the expert, pleased at this appreciation of his skill.

"And make one for me," "And one for me," "I *should* like one, too," was heard from various tables in the dining-room.

The salad-mixer soon found that about a dozen members were soliciting his services, and, nothing loth, set to work with a will. Beautifully dressed salads were dispatched to all quarters of the room, and the grateful recipients had nearly all finished his handiwork before the amateur chef found an opportunity to sit down to his own luncheon.

He was just about to do so when, glancing at his hands, he noticed something which caused him to pause.

"What's the matter, old chap?" called out a friend.

"Oh, nothing much," came the answer in a puzzled voice, "but I cut my finger rather badly yesterday, and the sticking-plaster seems to have disappeared. Who's eaten it, I wonder?"

Since that fateful day in August, 1914, not a few Bohemian clubs and clubs where the members are wont to sup and dance late, have been forced to close their doors through lack of patronage. Nearly £5,000, I am told, was lost in a few months by some speculative individuals who ventured to start a new lunch and supper club in war-time, but a few such well-known resorts of society and Bohemia as Ciro's are still well patronised by members unable to offer their services to their country, and still more largely by soldier and sailor men who appreciate the joy of an occasional evening in mufti.

But perhaps of all clubs which have been affected by the war, such popular resorts as the parterre of the Empire and Alhambra, for example, have changed most, for, in the good days these were patronised so frequently by the "knuts," as almost automatically to become known as the Alhambra Club and the Empire Club. On the outbreak of hostilities the real "knut" was one of the first to discard mufti for khaki—as we all knew he would.

Time was when the Alhambra and the Empire parterres were the London dress parades of the latest fashions in male attire. There if your dress-suit chanced to be a little out of date, you could see at once the

Some clubs make a fetish of silence, which accounts for the emotion of the old *habitué*, who, when a new member apologised for treading on his toe, observed in broken accents that it was the first time anyone had spoken to him for twenty-five years.

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particular sartorial solecisms of which you were guilty at the moment.

There, also, the imaginative "knut" was wont to endeavour to create the fashion in male attire of the future, and I well remember meeting one night, when the pulse of the world was normal, a cheery lad-of-the-village garbed in a purple dress-suit, with velvet collar, the whole creation tastefully set off by a lighter purple waistcoat, who remarked to me with befitting solemnity that everyone who is anyone would be wearing purple dress-suits within the next few months.

For the time being, however, this appalling prophecy has not proved reliable, for if you visit those particular parterres of variety theatres where the "knuts" and other gay roysterers were accustomed to go "knutting" and roystering, you will to-day, or perhaps I should say to-night, find them crowded with khaki-clad heroes in training, or home on leave for a few days, a stray provost-marshal, a sprinkling of business men well over age, and maybe a handful of proud fathers gallantly attempting to revive their youthful days, in order to enliven some youngster's few hours' rest from the trenches.

Yes, Clubland seems a very, very strange land these days. Secretaries wear worried looks, because new members appear not, members forced to remain at home fidget and fume at their inactivity. The spruce young club-waiter we used to know has been replaced by a venerable-looking gentleman of uncertain age. And waiting lists of clubs where members used to enter the names of their sons almost at birth are no more.

The taking over for national purposes of the premises of several clubs with a generous list of members has also far from improved the prospects of Clubland, for many members, and more particularly old-time members, have come to regard their club as a home from home, and to find "the" home from home suddenly transferred, as has frequently been the case lately, to districts largely unbeknown to them, has caused a feeling of resentment which is only compensated for by the reasons which have made such transference necessary.

It is always dangerous to prophesy, and particularly so in times like the present, but a very lengthy experience of club life induces me to form the opinion that things will certainly not be "as usual" for—and I regard this as a moderate estimate—at least ten years.

The gaps to be filled are too many—and the falling birth-rate conclusively proves this, for it must always be remembered that the percentage of the rising generation who can afford to join the more expensive and fashionable clubs is necessarily a small one.

The war has dealt severely with those clubs patronised by the "knuts," for the real "knut" was one of the first to discard mufti for khaki.

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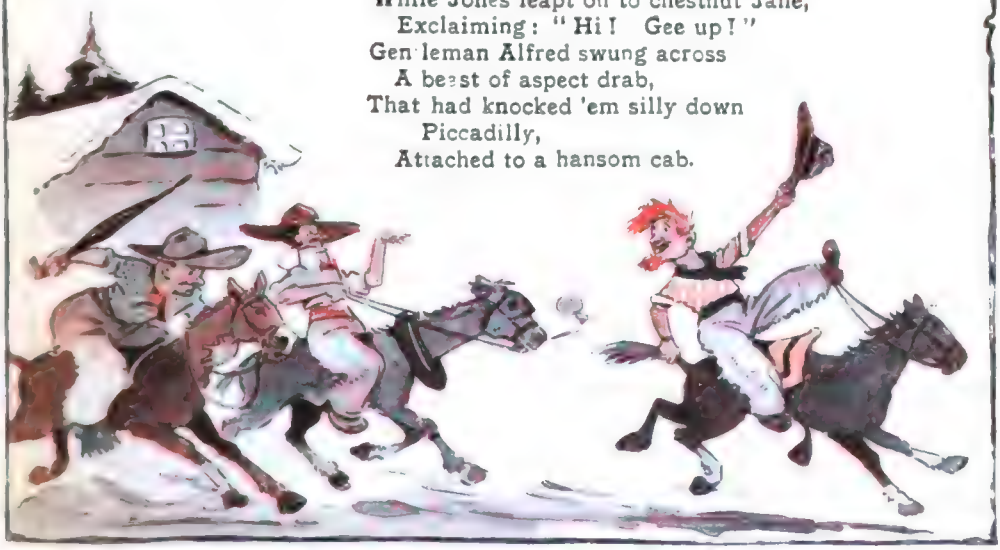
The Christmas Pudding

By François.

THE Boss stepped out of his Daimler,
And breathed on his new silk hat:
"I've knocked five teeth off the doggoned clutch,
And both back tyres are flat.
Barks-like-a-Dog's on the warpath,
The Banga river's in flood;
Now, who will ride to Fort McBride
And fetch the Christmas Pud?"

Up rose the three tall shearers,
Terrible Red-haired Dick
Clasped to his bust the good gold-dust,
While Jones flung down his pick;
Gentleman Alf, whose collar bespoke
His aristocratic blood,
Cried: "We will ride to Fort McBride,
And fetch the Christmas Pud!"

Red-haired Dick chose Billy,
Who won the Melbourne Cup,
While Jones leapt on to chestnut Jane,
Exclaiming: "Hi! Gee up!"
Gentleman Alfred swung across
A beast of aspect drab,
That had knocked 'em silly down
Piccadilly,
Attached to a hansom cab.



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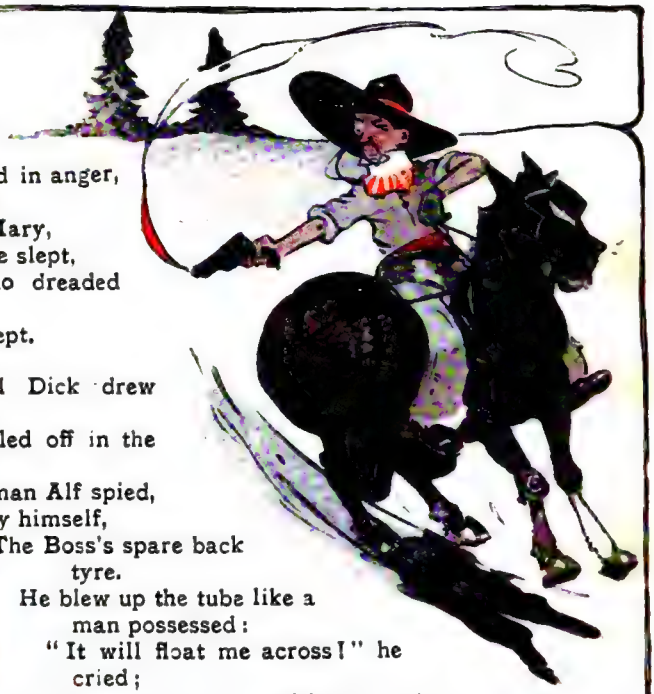
With never a nose between 'em
They galloped across the plain,
To where the Banga swirled in anger,
Swollen by years of rain.
And the Boss's daughter, Mary,
In the bedroom where she slept,
The Boss's daughter, who dreaded water,
Rolled on her bed and wept.



Red-haired Dick drew bridle,
Jones rolled off in the mire,
But Gentleman Alf spied, all by himself,
The Boss's spare back tyre.
He blew up the tube like a man possessed:
"It will float me across!" he cried;
Then forded the river without a quiver
And galloped for Fort McBride.

'Twas dawn on Christmas morning;
Beside two yawning graves
Stood Jones, with terrible Red-haired Dick,
Barks-like-a-Dog and his braves.
The coyotes howled as the great Chief scowled,
And the chipmunks chipped like sin;
And Long-in-the-Bones attacked poor Jones,
When—Gentleman Alf rode in.

His gun belched death like a Maxim,
The redskins broke and fled;
Barks-like-a-Dog fell, stiff as a log,
Full to the eyes with lead.
Jones and terrible Red-haired Dick
Swooned with a sickening thud,
When, carefully tied at Alfred's side,
They spied the Christmas Pud!

Outside the lonesome shanty
The snow lay ten feet thick,
And yet no bones made the Boss and Jones,
Or terrible Red-haired Dick.
Gentleman Alf pursued with glee—
But perfectly *comme il faut*—
The Boss's daughter, and deftly caught her
Under the mistletoe.

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"THOSE FLIGHTY FLAPPERS!"

By

Rosemary North

Phyllis.

Avis.

Rosamund.

Flappers are not always the objectionable creatures some people would have us believe. In the following pages we record the Christmas doings of six of the most charming flappers who ever wore silk stockings. We have persuaded six gifted artists to portray their varied charms and, incidentally, to reveal their taste in subalterns.—Ed. R.M.

"AUNT LAVINIA'S coming to spend Christmas," Mrs. Benson announced firmly from behind the tea-pot, "and I want you girls to be very nice to her."

She surveyed her three flapper daughters with the unbending air of one prepared for protest. It did not come.

"Of course, mother dear. She'll be our guest."

Rosamund's tone was faintly reproving. She was a self-possessed young person of seventeen, with brown eyes, satin-smooth black hair, and a weakness for Swinburne and *crêpe-de-Chine* underwear.

"Aunt Lavinia mends silk stockings beautifully," observed Lilian, applying herself to eggs and bacon with a steady concentration that belied her fragile appearance. Her hair was pale golden, and she was an expert in laying her burdens on other people.

Violet.

"She's not half a bad sort!" So the fifteen-year-old Violet, a mischievous, blue-eyed minx, just promoted to a pigtail. "She never minds even if we do play 'Pit' or set the gramophone blaring when she's gone to bed."

"Of course," the flappers' mother continued thoughtfully, "she does wear quaint garments, but then she's not well off, and Little Drearam only produces red flannel and galatea. I'm afraid theatres and dances won't be much in her line after the blameless atmosphere of Dorcas Meetings. Her great weakness is love affairs. Give her a romance to help along,

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Lilian.

Doris.

an engaged couple's quarrel to patch up, and she's perfectly happy."

"If that's all," said Violet, violating all the rules of war economy by heaping jam on buttered toast, "we ought to be able to keep her busy. I'm due to quarrel with Dick any day now, and surely you two can rouse the ire of Jack and Rod if you set yourselves to it?" she added to her sisters.

"My dear child, I don't want you to stir up strife on purpose," began Mrs. Benson, foreseeing a stormy Christmas. "I——"

"Don't you worry, darling," put in Lilian in the free-and-easy manner adopted by the present generation towards their parents, "and wouldn't the tea-cosy be more at home on the tea-pot instead of the milk-jug? *We'll* look after Aunt Lavinia, won't we, Rosamund?"

Her sleepy grey eyes met those of her sister in a meaning glance. Violet caught it also and nodded knowingly.

"Doris and Phyllis'll be here to-morrow, and Avis. Doris is always snarling at Claude, her gunnery boy. I daresay we shall manage a breeze or two—we can have them instead of charades. If not, well——" she stopped short as Rosamund's foot smote hers under the table.

"For goodness' sake, kid, stop chattering and pass the marmalade," she said.

Aunt Lavinia arrived three days before Christmas attended by a tin box and draped with brown-paper parcels. Mrs. Benson being absent at canteen work, the three girls formed a bodyguard about her, conducted her to her room, and later clustered round her black silk-clad form and pressed tea and cakes upon her.

"I suppose you'll be going to the pantomime, my dears?" she inquired, her kind old eyes full of benevolent interest.

It was Rosamund who, from her post behind the tea-table, explained that their own particular subs. were more attached to revues, and sketched a riotous programme of theatres, dances, and motor-cycling with which they meant to enliven the holidays.

"I'm sure they're all dear boys," said the old lady when she had been put *au fait* with the characteristics of her nieces' attendant swains. "And now I think, if you don't mind, I'll go and rest in my room till dinner-time."

Rosamund conducted her thither, her tall young figure a striking contrast to the small, brisk form of the silvery-haired old lady. There was something rather pathetic in her grateful appreciation of the blazing fire and luxurious sofa upon which the girl installed her.

"I hope you will be comfortable, Aunt Lavinia."

Rosamund kissed her withered cheek as she tucked another cushion behind her. Then, with her graceful, unhurried movements, she sank into a chair by the fire, her fuchsia-coloured frock making a bright splash of colour against the grey walls.

"May I stay and talk to you, Aunt Lavinia?" she asked, her sleek, dark head sinking back gently against the cushions.

"Of course you may, my dear," answered the old lady, stroking the satin eiderdown with reverent fingers.

"It's about Jack—he's in the R.F.A., you know. Yes, Royal Field Artillery! You'll see him to-morrow—he's my own special—tall and so handsome, with the dearest dark moustache—the strong, quiet type, you know. I'm just the tiniest bit afraid of him. That's why it's so difficult to coax him round."

"You've had a little difference? Is that it?" asked Aunt Lavinia anxiously.

"Yes. It was partly my fault." Rosamund cupped her little round chin in her hand, the picture of youthful tragedy. "Jack was taking me to a dance, and he promised to send my flowers. I had a duck of a frock,

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Auntie, shrimp pink, and shoes and stockings that matched to a hair. I asked Jack for carnations—and he sent me roses.'

"Well, well, my dear, perhaps he forgot," murmured Aunt Lavinia. "I shouldn't have worried over a trifle like that."

"But don't you see, Aunt Lavinia," pursued

"'Flowers all right?' he sang out, for I had them in my hand. . . . I stopped where I was on the stairs, and flung them, box and all, at his feet."

Rosamund, looking suitably intense, "it looked as if he didn't care what I wore. I was so disappointed and—yes, furious. I came downstairs in my pink frock—such a duck, very bunchy, and embroidered in silver—and there was Jack, looking handsomer than ever with his two stars and nice granitey chin.

"'Flowers all right?' he sang out, for I had them in my hand. If he hadn't said that I might have forgiven him, but he looked so annoyingly content and—well, I stopped where I was on the stairs, and flung them, box and all, at his feet. Oh, I know it was childish and horribly rude, but I couldn't help it. Jack's never been the same since. Yes, I'm quite willing to meet him half way, but he's so proud. He'll never own himself in the wrong."

"Leave him to me, my dear." Aunt Lavinia was sitting bolt upright, her pale cheeks flushed. "I think I can talk him round. No, don't thank me; I love smoothing things out for the young folk; I was young myself once."

"You are still," whispered Rosamund, and slipped away to dress for dinner.

Aunt Lavinia was preparing for bed, girt in a dressing-gown of aggressive purple, when a timid knock heralded the arrival of Lilian, her snowdrop face very appealing, her hair falling in two pale golden plaits over her forget-me-not dressing-gown.

"May I have a chat, Aunt Lavinia, or are you too tired?" she asked.

Aunt Lavinia was not at all tired, it seemed, and settled herself by the fire while Lilian sat on the hearthrug and nursed her knees dreamily.

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"I was taking the saucepan off the fire and the handle was red-hot. . . . I held the horrid thing out to Rodney, and he didn't take it, so I plumped it on his knee.

"I told you about Rodney, didn't I? He's a sub-lieutenant on a boat. What boat? I think it's a cruiser, but it may be a submarine; I know it's something that floats," she began in her helpless, inconsequent way.

"Yes, my dear. A very responsible position, I've no doubt," said the old lady encouragingly.

"He's a perfect darling! So good-looking! Looks delicious in uniform," gushed Lilian; "sea-blue eyes and golden hair, and such a merry brown face. We were great pals until we fell out over the toffee. We were making it on the school-room fire one wet evening, Rodney and I, and everything went wrong. I spilt treacle down my pink *crêpe-de-Chine* blouse to start with, and Rodney dropped his cigarette into the toffee. I was taking the saucepan off the fire and the handle was red-hot—I can't think why someone doesn't invent a saucepan handle that'll keep cool—when it happened. I held the horrid thing out to Rodney, and he didn't take it, so I plumped it on his knee."

"My dear child! You must have burnt him severely," observed Aunt Lavinia.

"That's what he said," answered Lilian mournfully; "at least that's part of it. The rest I shouldn't like to repeat. I said I was sorry, and offered to patch his trouser knees, but he hasn't been really affectionate since. He'll be here to-morrow, and I wondered if—oh! You are a dear, Aunt Lavinia. Yes, I'm sure you'll bring him round. Good-night, darling Auntie—I feel so much happier now," and she vanished, leaving her elderly relative to ponder on the melancholy coincidence of her nieces' blighted affections.

"At that moment Dick came out, too. . . . 'What weak-minded idiot did this?' he asked, and shook, actually shook those atrocious pyjamas in my face."

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"Phil only tolerates my smoking at any time, but when I puffed away under the nose of the C.O., that put the lid on it." [*Page* 120, *col.* 2.]

A good night's rest prepared her for the shock which followed Violet's boisterous appearance with her breakfast tray next morning.

"You do like scrambled eggs, don't you?" asked Violet, very brisk and taut in her check skirt and smart white silk blouse. "May I stop a bit? I've had my breakfast," and she plumped down at the foot of the bed, with a bounce that set the coffee-pot rocking ominously.

"Well, my dear?" Aunt Lavinia buttered her toast with a smile of pleased expectancy.

"It's like this, Aunt Lavinia"—Violet whisked back her long pigtail and came straight to the point—"I'm in a bit of a hole, and you're such a sport, I know you'll help me. It's that tiresome Dick—men are really a great trial!—and he's an awful dear, though he *has* got a bit above himself since he got a commission in the R.E."

"You're very young to have love affairs, my dear," put in Aunt Lavinia. "Now when I was a girl——"

"But they're like the measles, Aunt Lavinia; you can't prevent them," said Violet, "and the war seems to bring them on somehow. Dick's 18 carat, but he does like to ride the high horse! And it's so absurd to kick up a dust just because I sewed up his beastly pyjamas the night he slept here. They were hideous, anyway—the colour of pink blotting paper, and he's got terra-cotta hair.

"My bedroom's opposite his, and I could hear him snoring with rage, so I slipped on my kimono—a pale pink one with black and white storks on it—and popp d out in case there was a chance of enlarging my vocabulary. At that moment Dick came out, too—he was still in uniform—saw me, and his hair bristled with fury.

"'What weak-minded idiot did this?' he asked, and shook, actually

Claude was to meet me at "The Frivolity" for a *matinée* at 2.30. He arrived half-an-hour late, with his cap all askew and a smut on his nose." [*Page* 121, *col.* 1.]

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"Terry's the dearest boy, but too fond of kissing. . . . . I'd kissed him twice, once under the mistletoe and once under nothing."

shook, those atrocious pyjamas in my face. And I thought the Army had such nice manners!

"'I did!' I said. 'And if you make such a howling fuss over a few yards of cotton you'll be a great success when it comes to barbed-wire entanglements!' Then I retreated, and—he's been distantly polite ever since. You will tell him not to get his wool up over nothing, won't you, Auntie dear? He's very young, and his sense of humour's got undermined."

Aunt Lavinia promised. She foresaw a crowded day.

The visiting team of flappers arrived for lunch, closely followed by Rosamund's sub. Jack, who, fortified with curried chicken and sole in aspic, was cajoled by Aunt Lavinia with surprising ease into the library. Half-an-hour later the old lady emerged, dispatched Rosamund thither with a reassuring pat, and sank into an armchair by the hall fire, the light of victory in her mild blue eyes.

There Phyllis, the eldest flapper cousin, ran her to earth. Phyllis was a smart young person, with a pert nose and glorious red hair. She sat down on the oak settle, and sent out her S.O.S.

"Rosamund told me what a dear you are," she said in her clear young voice, "and I know you'll help me out of my troubles. Yes, it's Phil! He's just got his commission; a good sort but stiff-necked — bit early Victorian, you know. His Colonel's worse, a moth-eaten old fossil. If it hadn't been for him we shouldn't have fallen out. Phil and I were lunching at Pirouet's, and the Colonel was at the next table. Phil only tolerates my smoking at any time, but when I puffed away under the nose of the C.O., that put the lid on it. Phil glared like a Sergeant-Major, and he hasn't given me a chocolate since. I'm really fond of him, and you're my last hope."

Aunt Lavinia . . . was hugging to herself the thought that if she *was* sixty-three and grey-haired, she had been the means of making twelve young people happy.

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"I'll do what I can, my dear," promised the old lady with the gracious air of one who feels herself much sought after, at which Phyllis dropped a kiss in the neighbourhood of her left ear and departed, whistling.

Aunt Lavinia had just buttoned herself into her black satin dress, and was congratulating herself on the fact that, thanks to her diplomacy, Lilian and Rodney were no longer sundered by a toffee saucepan, when a gentle tap preceded the entrance of Doris, a Greuze-like maiden with a wistful mouth and soulful eyes. She sat down on the window-seat, arranging her frilled pink skirt carefully.

"I want to confide in you, dear Miss Benson," she began primly. "The fact is Claude and I have had a disagreement. He and I are great pals, you see. He's a gunnery officer, and has a perfect passion for guns. They're at the bottom of the trouble. It all happened last week. Claude was to meet me at "The Frivolity" for a *matinée* at 2.30. He arrived half-an-hour late, with his cap all askew and a smut on his nose; said he'd been detained—one of the guns went wrong and he had to put it right. And there was I in my new winter costume and furs, and he hadn't even had the decency to wash his face. Do you wonder I was annoyed?"

"No, my dear, I don't. But a boy who puts his work first is going to make a fine officer," suggested Aunt Lavinia from the fireside.

"I know." Doris blushed charmingly. "That's why I'm dying to climb down if you'll only pave the way for me."

"I'll do my best," promised Aunt Lavinia. "You children seem to get into sad scrapes with your sweethearts."

"We do, but men are so trying. There's the dinner gong!" cried Doris, as she slipped an arm through the old lady's.

Dinner over, Aunt Lavinia exerted her efforts on behalf of her youngest niece, and retired with her knitting to the deserted drawing-room, leaving Dick and Violet growing momentarily more affectionate over a box of chocolates. There Avis found her, and, dropping on to a silk floor cushion, besought her aid with an expression of chastened sadness on her plump, rosy face.

"I do think now I'm sixteen I should be treated with a little respect," she said, stretching out her suede-shod feet to the fire. "But Terry's Irish and he won't see it. He's in the R.F.C., and knows tons about aeroplanes. Terry's the dearest boy, but too fond of kissing, and I hate being mauled. He was at home the other night, and I'd kissed him twice—once under the mistletoe and once under nothing—and then he wasn't satisfied. He clawed hold of me on the stairs, and I—well, I smacked his face and told him I couldn't put up with a continuous performance, even from him."

"And you were quite right, my dear, though your methods were a little drastic," nodded Aunt Lavinia. "I'll see what I can do with Master Terry when he comes tomorrow."

"You dear!" murmured Avis, clutching Aunt Lavinia's hands, knitting and all, in her warm young fingers.

It was Christmas Eve, and the six girls were all gathered round the fire in Rosamund's room, engaged in the mystic rites of hair-brushing.

"Didn't it go off well?" Phyllis of the pert nose and red hair put down her silver brush and smiled mischievously.

"Splendidly!" Rosamund, gorgeous in a poppy-red kimono, braided her black hair with serene deliberation. "Dear Aunt Lavinia! She was so pleased to smooth things out for us, and I know she enjoyed it as much as we did."

"More!" sang out Violet. "It was awful making up that yarn about Dick and the pyjamas."

"The boys were ripping, too, and played up awfully well," put in Lilian, "and they've got the jolliest presents for her to-morrow as tokens of gratitude for her peacemaking."

"And you don't think she ever suspected that the quarrels were imaginary and designed to take the place of the theatres and parties she doesn't like?" asked Doris, wrapping her violet kimono about her as she prepared to depart.

"I'm sure she didn't!" declared the others, and they were right. For at that precise moment Aunt Lavinia, lying awake in the firelit room, was hugging to herself the thought that if she *was* sixty-three and grey-haired, she had been the means of making twelve young people happy that Christmas.

"Though the dear boys were wonderfully tractable," she murmured as she fell asleep; "they only wanted a little skilful handling."

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THE WAR AFTER THE WAR.

Photo J. Russ & Sons.

By
Sir Robert Baden-Powell, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., LL.D.

Every thinking person realises that when the present war is over we shall still have to face an industrial campaign against Germany. In the following article Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the distinguished soldier and author, urges the need for training the youth of the nation, so that they may be prepared to grapple with the problem, and puts forward some striking suggestions by which success may be attained.

Peace and goodwill are the usual accompaniments of Christmas, but we don't see much of them just now, when almost every Christian nation is at war with its neighbour. It is a glorified dog fight. We all claim that we are fighting in order to gain peace, but even when the fighting ceases is it likely that we are going to have real peace?

Be Prepared!

Already the enemy are organising their forces for the war after the war—a so-called peaceful war, but one which, though waged in commerce and industry, will be none the less bitter, none the less methodical, and none the less unscrupulous. It is to that that we must look forward, and for which we must be prepared in good time.

In South Africa eighteen years ago we had watched the Boers preparing their defences; our railways had carried their heavy guns and ammunition which we knew could be used against no one but ourselves—and we absolutely refused to prepare any counter-steps. We were caught unprepared, and in consequence spent millions beyond what should have been necessary. And after a very expensive adventure we muddled through fairly successfully.

Not so very long afterwards we again watched a neighbouring country—Germany—preparing her land and sea forces, admittedly against Great Britain. Direct warnings were as frequent as indirect ones, and yet we took no notice. Our politicians had no desire to harass the tax-paying voters, and therefore they closed the eyes of the nation to what was going on against us.

The war came like a bolt from the blue to many, though by no means to all. Sailors and soldiers had braced themselves for the shock as far as the Government and Treasury

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would allow them, and they were just able to stand it. Millions of pounds are now being poured out which might have been saved by proper foresight in good time. We shall in the end probably muddle through to success in the field—thanks to our fighting men and to the munition workers behind them, but no thanks to our political leaders.

The Coming Campaign.

Those with eyes in their heads now see another war arising as soon as peace is signed, in the shape of a commercial and industrial campaign engineered by our enemies.

Were it going to be merely a fair competition in trade there would be nothing to say against it, but there is more involved in it than this. Germany's main aim in starting the *present* war was the smashing of Great Britain and her trade; a first step to this was the subjugation of France and the occupation of the coasts of the Channel.

The "contemptible little British Army" stepped in, and, small though it was, contributed the necessary ounce in the balance which turned the scale in favour of the Allies at the critical moment at Mons and on the Marne.

Germany lost her war on the Marne. She can now only try to make the best of it in order to gain what terms she can in the Peace Conference.

But she is not going to sit down under this defeat; she cannot afford to. She has to go on with her original aim, though it will have to be by a different road. Instead of through war, she will attack us through peaceful means, and turn her efforts to smashing us in commerce and industry. She is already organising her forces to that end. Are we again going to look on and let her prepare them while we "wait and see"? It is surely up to us to profit by the lessons of the past, and do our best by organising our reserves to be prepared to face her and to beat her in this line also?

The Needs of To-morrow.

The struggle will begin the day that peace is signed and will go on during the next ten or twenty years. Our reserves, therefore, will be found among the rising generation of the Empire, and it behoves us so to train them that they may be able to take the burden on their shoulders with some prospect of success.

Our education in the past has had its good traditions and has laid the foundation for further development, but no one can claim that it is to-day the education that is required for to-morrow. Like the dog that had been run over by the steam-roller, it is "not much use now—leastwise not as a dog"—or rather, not as an education for what is coming.

It is to to-morrow that we must look forward in framing our schemes. Our education should not merely take the form of training men to be better manufacturers, more astute financiers, or more skilled workmen, but in addition to this it should aim to make our manhood one of high ideals and character, so that we may vindicate what we are fighting for, and prove ourselves to be a nation composed of men of honour—champions of right and justice; men with human sympathies, not merely "a nation of self-seeking shopkeepers."

Two Points in Our Favour.

Fortunately, we have in our nation two good qualities with which to start. We have to our credit a certain amount of innate character, the want of which the Germans endeavour to make up for by organised methodical instruction; and secondly, our character reveals itself in our manufactures, which, if not always catering for customers' needs, yet have a reputation for honest workmanship, which goods "made in Germany" have never had.

But for success in the war after the war further development of that character and further expansion of that skill is needed. This must be to a great extent a matter of education in the rising generation.

The first step in formulating a system of education must necessarily be the recognition of its aim. This is obviously essential, and yet it is a point which is very largely missed by those who set their hand to the task of defining what education should be.

Our Aim and Its Achievement.

Educationists are prone to insist that a classical education is necessary in order to form a well-balanced intellect, and more recently opponents in the same field have arisen to say that only scientific teaching is really up-to-date. But, with all due deference, one would think that possibly the taxpayer and the employer are the people who could best define the aim; the educationists could then come in and say what the steps should be towards attaining that end.

The taxpayer, for instance, may point out that he spends an enormous sum annually on educating the rising generation to be efficient citizens, but that he spends a still larger sum in correcting and remedying their failure to respond to such training, through bills for prisons, poor relief, old age pensions, unemployables, etc. The employer, whether

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he be the State, the Church, or the commercial or industrial user of men, can on his part point to the want of efficiency—that is, the want of character, skill, and endurance—in the material supplied to him by the schools for his use.

Efficiency rather than erudition should be the work of education, but it is inclined to be the other way round just now.

Apart from the immediate question of the after-war with Germany, our aim should be to prevent in the next genera n the failings which exist in the present.

I will endeavour to save you pages of reading by stating in the following diagram some of the prevailing inefficiencies, their causes and origin, and a suggestion for steps which might be taken in education to eradicate them.

ill for the future when the men come back to take the places thus filled by boys.

Moral and civic education is handicapped by the youngsters being mixed with adult workers, in many cases of a rough kind. They are excited to an hysterical kind of surface patriotism coupled with a hero-worship for soldiers which is not always beneficial.

With regard to their stamina and physical endurance, the excessive work to which they are subjected, long hours, and over-strain all tell their tale in staleness and premature breakdown on ill-prepared bodies and minds.

It is essential, therefore, in the immediate future that we should take note of the abnormal as well as of the normal defects in the nation, and develop our education on such a line as to eradicate these, so that every

	National Inefficienc	Their Causes.	Remedies through Education (as applied in the Boy Scout movement).*
MORAL	Irreligion ... ... Indiscipline ... ... Low moral standards ... ... Thriftlessness ... ... Loafing ... ... Shirking and scamping ... ... Disregard of others ... ... Want of patriotism ... ... Corruption and dishonesty ... Crime	Want of self-discipline and indifference to higher conscience	*CHARACTER:* Good environment. Sense of honour. Self-discipline. Sense of duty and responsibility. Sense of justice and fair play. God through Nature study. *HANDCRAFT:* Resourcefulness and handcraft. Interest in work. *SERVICE FOR OTHERS:* Patriotism through personal service. Religion in practice.
PHYSICAL	Ill-health ... ... Squalor ... ... Drink and immorality ... .. Infant mortality ... ... Mental deficiency ... ... Physical deficiency	Want of care and want of hygienic knowledge on part of parents	*PHYSICAL HYGIENE:* Responsibility for our physical development. Daily practice of care of self in health and hygiene.

* These remedies are put into practice in the Scout and Girl Guide movements through activities which directly appeal to the boys and girls.

The above national defects are those of normal times, and which existed before the war. But the war has brought with it an abnormal condition of things, and has added to the above defects many others.

The Defects of Abnormal Conditions.

Character, for instance, has been further undermined by the evil of self-importance (due to high wages and easy employment), unrest, and the gambling spirit. Technical training is discouraged since high pay instead of skill makes the chief appeal to the boys. They are jumped into any kind of job whether they are suited to it or not, and their training seldom fits them to take up any line of work other than that in which they are actually being practised. This all augurs

single boy and girl may be trained and efficient to be of use to himself and to the State, and that there shall not be, as there has been—to the disgrace of the nation—in the past, a large amount of waste human material which with proper organisation might well have been trained to be an asset instead of an incubus to the country.

Citizenship *v.* Scholarship.

The first step, however, before much can be done, is for the public to educate itself—that is the parents, employers, trades unions, and teachers themselves to consider what is needed for our country in the matter of training, what should be the aim of the training, what are really the most practical methods of carrying it into effect, and what

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the value of such arrangements will be, not only to the children, but to the public themselves, and to the nation after us. In this way their goodwill and co-operation would be assured, without which many of the steps in education would otherwise be misunderstood and rendered unavailing.

The second point is to develop education instead of the old out-of-date instruction in the schools; to give it the definite aim of being a preparation for efficient citizenship and not merely one for scholarship. Its classification under four departments, as in the diagram, will help it to meet most requirements, *i.e.*:

Character,
Handcrafts,
Service for others,
Physical hygiene.

These should be considered as essential subjects, equally important with the three Rs.

This would give us a more practical education in normal times, and at the present, when abnormal conditions prevail, it could well be applied for giving the proper antidotes.

Look After the Children's Welfare!

Then, of equal importance with the education of the public and the education of the children is proper juvenile guardianship under experienced welfare officers, whose business it should be to father the boys during their employment—both inside and outside the works. This is a step of the highest importance. Through such means can be supplied:

(1) Advice in preparing themselves for careers before leaving school, and also the right training for the profession selected, through continuation and technical schools.

(2) Employment, whereby the round peg will be placed in the round hole, since so many of our failures are due to their being misfits, not unfits.

(3) Care, both moral and hygienic, of the growing youths.

(4) Continuous guardianship, whereby they are followed up when they leave one factory for another, and kept in touch with until they are fairly embarked on careers of their own.

This may be said to be the function of parents, and so to a great extent it is; but in very many cases among the working parents they are not in a position to exercise their responsibility, and it can far better be undertaken by a department organised to that end.

To some extent the necessary machinery exists in After-care Committees, School Managers, Welfare Secretaries in big factories, etc., but it is not organised in the very many small employments; the "following up" is not at present worked on any system, and the environment outside the school and workshop, which is of vital importance to the boy's character, is practically untouched except by voluntary societies.

But new departures on these lines are out of touch with tradition.

Professor Sadler has touched upon this point in a recent number of the *Contemporary Review*, where, in advocating "English education for England," he has said: "The Boy Scouts have shown a way of escape from too tight a grip of those traditions."

It is true that in the Boy Scout Movement we are trying to help in the direction of welfare, and so also in the Girl Guide Movement. Both are run on similar lines for similar ends—namely, through individual character-education and good environment to lead the boys and girls to become citizens who are *efficient* citizens.

Our aims are identical with those of many other associations for the young. But our united efforts so far only touch a comparatively small part of the population, whereas to be effective they must touch the whole, or, at any rate, the major part.

We cannot afford to let our human material run to waste in these days. But our efforts are hampered by the need of helpers and workers. The boys and girls are ready enough and eager to be taught.

Preparing Our Reserves.

In this work, then, lies one of the biggest openings for any man or woman for doing, not merely his bit for the war, but a more permanent and still more valuable service to the country—namely, that of preparing the reserves to carry on the war after the war, and for bringing about a higher standard of morality, of prosperity, and of happiness to our people.

Further than this, such work can be a powerful factor in promoting universal and permanent peace, because the Scout Movement being a world-wide brotherhood, with its branches now flourishing among the rising generation of every civilised country, provides a tangible bond of goodwill and understanding between them.

Thus it is a true instrument of practical capability for bringing about the realisation of the phrase of which everyone now sees the real import—"Peace and Goodwill among men."

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HIGH JINKS IN JEOPARDY.

By Dorothy Rose.

"A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips."

The Good Time Coming.

When at the beginning of December Angela heard that her husband expected to get his long-deferred eight days' leave at Christmas, her pretty, six-roomed house at Chelsea hummed with the spirit of joyous preparation. Nor were her activities limited to the scouring of white paint and the washing of rosebud chintz; they overflowed and found relief in the question of suitable relaxation for a war-worn lieutenant.

Eight days was so pitifully short a time; not one golden moment must be wasted. Geoffrey was such a sociable, gaiety-loving boy, and eight months of the monotonous, nerve-racking existence at the Front would but increase his appreciation of the champagne and tinsel of life. So argued Angela as she bent her pretty head with its sheath of pale golden hair over pencil and pad in her blue and buff dining-room. Christmas shopping, theatres, a restaurant dinner or two, a long tramp with tea at a country inn, a little dinner to the Wilson's—Geoff and Guy Wilson were always *such* pals—Angela put down her pencil privately convinced of the utter inadequacy of the authorities who limit a young husband's leave to eight impossibly short days.

The plan of campaign settled, another difficulty presented itself—that of finance. Geoff worked for a firm of accountants, and the £2 a week they allowed her, added to what he could spare from his pay, left little margin for amusements. Angela was not very domesticated, and capricus relations had prophesied a speedy return to her parents on Geoff's departure; they had reckoned without the new and wondrous spirit which has led so many women, hitherto sheltered and aimless, to shoulder burdens and face responsibilities in the absence of their menfolk. So Angela squared her slim shoulders, dismissed the maid, let two rooms to an unobtrusive lady artist, and "carried on" in the little home hallowed by memories of a stalwart, brown-faced boy-man with merry blue eyes and an attractive kink in his red-brown hair.

It was while she was out shopping, her winsome face, with its little pointed chin and wide blue eyes appropriately serious, her market basket on her arm, that inspiration came to Angela, suggested by the attractive look of some home-made sweets in the window of a high-class confectioner's.

"*I* can make sweets," mused Angela, glueing her dainty nose to the window. "My caramels and fondants used to be dreams. I wonder if——"

The end of it was that she reached home laden like a small pack-mule, with a goodly store of sugar, walnuts, chocolate powder, and other commodities to be turned into toothsome dainties and sold to her friends with the express purpose of providing worthy entertainment for a lieutenant in His Majesty's Forces.

In the days that followed Angela lived in a blue overall amid a medley of pink and white fondant, chocolate, and nuts, aided and abetted in her debauch by her bosom friend, Meg Wilson, who entered into the scheme heart and soul, and lent her deft fingers to the task of packing and tying up the boxes with scarlet satin ribbon. Orders came in thick and fast, and Angela laboured unremittingly, glorying in her weariness, since by means of it *he* was to have his golden week.

And as she worked she planned her wardrobe; her pink ninon would do for the

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theatre, her white *crêpe-de-Chine* needed a fresh waistbelt—it should be forget-me-not blue; Geoff always loved her in blue. She would get new buttons for her white satin blouse, some gold leaves to furbish up her myrtle green hat. Geoff should have no cause to be other than proud of her when they held high carnival together.

Somehow the orders were fulfilled, the necessary furbishings done, the fatted calf figuratively prepared, all before the appointed date. And as the night before Geoff's arrival Angela coaxed the last drawing-room cushion into its old-rose cover and gave a final polish to her husband's long-unused tobacco jar, the little house seemed to radiate peace and pleasurable anticipation.

Angela hummed a little song as she went to bed in the still, grey-walled bedroom so soon to waken to life to the comforting sounds of a man's presence. To-morrow Geoff would be here, would drop his boots on the floor in his dear, noisy way, and splash the bathroom ankle-deep in water over his ablutions.

To-morrow would soon be here! And tucked away in a corner of her desk was nearly £2 10s., the net result of her sweet-making labours. Angela smiled a smile of pure content as she slipped into bed.

"I do hope they haven't cropped the kink out of his hair," she murmured as she fell asleep.

Shattered Hopes.

Dinner was over, and the big armchair by the drawing-room fire had come into its own again, for Geoffrey lay back in its capacious depths with the appreciative air of a man to whom silken cushions and softly-shaded lights have long been strangers.

Angela watched him from the silk floor cushion beside the fender, her delicate chin propped in her hands, her pale golden hair almost ruddy in the leaping firelight. She wore a little silk frock of shimmering blue, its colour reflected in the eyes which rested happily, but with a touch of yearning, on the quiet khaki-clad figure opposite.

For Geoff had changed. His boyishness had gone; hardship and monotony had quenched his high spirits; responsibility robbed him of his easy-going light-heartedness; the horrors of war had hardened his jaw and wrung the laughter from his eyes. He sat perfectly still, with that intense stillness that tells of overwrought nerves and complete exhaustion. And Angela, watching him, glimpsed a little of the nightmare of depression and dread expectancy which "the line" holds for those endowed with a highly-strung, imaginative temperament.

"I hope you haven't made any plans, darling." Geoff held out his hand, and Angela dropped on the rug beside him, her blue eyes clouding momentarily. "I feel so dead to the world—all I want is just to sit by the fire and look at you. Simply topping, that get-up! Jove! But it is good to be home," he added, with a sigh of mingled weariness and content.

"We'll do just as you like," said Angela, pressing her soft cheek against his fingers caressingly. "You shall have a glorious rest for a day or two, and then we'll see about gaieties. Lots of people know you're home, and they're sure to want a glimpse of you."

"I don't want to see them." The new lines in Geoff's face deepened, his blue eyes became moody, almost resentful. "They're sure to jaw—want to know when the war's going to end, and how many Germans I killed. They mean well, but, ye gods, if they'd seen the sights I've seen, heard the heartrending cries—kiddie, you *do* understand, don't you? I—I can't face them—not yet!"

"Yes, dear old boy." Angela stifled a little sigh—Geoff had always been such a sociable soul, had welcomed any excuse for merrymaking. His nerves were all on edge; in a day or two he would see things differently. Pity prompted her to let him have his way; common-sense whispered the ill-effects of allowing him to brood, urged her to rouse him out of himself, even though against his will. "You'd like to do a play or two, wouldn't you?" she ventured, raising her head from his knee to meet the abstracted gaze of his once-alert blue eyes.

"Don't feel very keen, sweetheart," he answered. "I don't fancy the giddy whirl somehow. Home's good enough for me."

"We'll see," announced Angela with a wise little nod. Try as she would she could not quite keep the disappointment out of her voice. Geoff *had* been up against it, but she, too, had been lonely, had dragged through weary days of longing and monotony. She had looked forward so eagerly to this glorious interlude. It was a little hard, she felt, and yet——

"You don't mind, darling?" Geoff's arm stole round her shoulders, and even in the midst of her disappointment Angela sensed a new, indefinable tenderness in his caress. The old gay boisterousness had gone; there was a new reverence, a dear protecting tenderness as though in the misery of exile he had groped his way to a truer appreciation of womanhood and the woman he held most dear.

"I don't mind anything," she whispered,

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carrying his brown hand to her lips, "now that I have you."

Nevertheless, she was a wee bit disappointed when next day she had to set forth on her Christmas-shopping expedition alone From his seat in the blue-cushioned armchair by the dining-room fire, Geoff shook his head in answer to her appeal.

"I can't forsake this peace for the bustle of London shops," he said, "not even for the joy of taking you out in that ripping green hat you showed me last night. You trot along and I'll have tea ready when you come home."

So Angela retired to get ready and drop a tear on the green velvet hat which she had trimmed for his delectation as much as her own. She had meant to go to the Wilsons' and make a clean breast of things, but by the time she had explained to Geoff the exact dwelling-place of the tea-caddy and found a mislaid shopping list, it was too late. She would go on her way back, she decided, as she boarded an opportune 'bus.

It happened that Geoff's solitude was not long unbroken, for he had barely settled down again with his pipe and book when a knock brought him reluctantly to the door. A moment later Mrs. Wilson was facing him in the twin chair, a plump, bright-faced little woman with humorous grey eyes and a cordial manner.

"It is a pleasure to see you back, Mr. Graham," she said, with her pleasant smile. "I know Angela's been living for this week. I came really to ask if you'd come to dinner on Tuesday instead of Monday—that is, if you're not booked for Tuesday. I know war-worn warriors are immensely in demand."

Geoff, somewhat taken aback. stirred the fire thoughtfully. Evidently Angela had accepted an invitation to the Wilsons', and had not seen fit to mention it. Geoff had charming manners, and his attractive, clean-shaven face showed nothing but pleasure as he turned to his companion.

"Tuesday's quite a free day," he said, "and we shall be delighted. Angela hadn't mentioned it, but we had such vast arrears of conversation to make up that it evidently slipped her."

"I don't wonder." Mrs. Wilson smiled sympathetically. "Oh, by the way, Dick sent you his regards, and is looking forward to a long chat to-morrow night. We're coming to dinner—but perhaps Angela hadn't broken the news to you?" she added, with a growing feeling of bewilderment.

"To be quite frank, she hadn't," answered Geoff, becoming vaguely aware that Angela's reticence was due to his avowed disinclination for society.

"It's all planned, down to the last coffee spoon," his companion informed him with a nod of her mauve-turbaned head. "Angela's plan of campaign is most comprehensive. I warned her you wouldn't have time to breathe, but she was so sure you'd be hungering for society that she insisted on a regular Cook's Tour—I hardly expected to find you in this afternoon, but I suppose she was merciful and let you off the shopping?"

"Yes. Angela knows I hate marching about shops," replied Geoff, his eyes on the leaping flames. So Angela *had* made plans, and abandoned them without a word at his desire. A vague self-reproach assailed him. Poor little girl! She had had a dull time lately, and——

"Well, I must be off!"

Mrs. Wilson had risen and was fastening her furs. In her quick, observant way she had glimpsed something of the hitch in Angela's plans—plans made for the old, laughter-loving Geoff, who seemed such poles apart from this quiet, self-contained soldier with the grave blue eyes and strange air of abstraction. Womanlike, her heart ached for him, but she knew the yearning love and sweet anticipation which had coloured the young wife's loving little programme—there was Angela's side to be considered—he owed her a meed of pleasure and gaiety for the long months of anxiety and solitude.

"Do enjoy yourself," she said, as she held out her hand. "Angela's so bent on giving you a good time, and it's been pretty dull for her lately. She's been through a lot, and she's stood it wonderfully. I don't think she's been to a theatre since you left; she's got arrears of gaiety to make up, and she has counted on this week so much—smartened up her frocks and everything. Good-bye, and give her my love," she finished, and with a wave of her muff was gone.

Geoff sat down in the armchair again and lit his pipe. Meg Wilson's words had had the desired effect, had set him wondering whether, after all, Angela had not a right to expect some festivities in his company. She had had a pretty stiff time, poor little woman, and she'd been plucky, deuced plucky! Certainly he didn't feel very much like entering the giddy whirl—things had bitten too deep, had taken too much out of him for that; but because he shrank from it, was that sufficient reason for depriving Angela of the diversions she had hoped to share with him?

So he pondered, not realising that the plunge once taken, a little gaiety was the best antidote to his mood of weariness and depression.

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"I hope you haven't made any plans, darling." Geoff held out his hand, and Angela dropped on the rug beside him. . . . "I feel so dead to the world—all I want is just to sit by the fire and look at you.

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By the time Angela came in laden with parcels, contrition pricked at his heart. The cold air had whipped a glorious colour into her cheeks; with her appealing blue eyes and soft, rounded cheeks, she was the embodiment of youth and sweetness. Geoff's touch was very tender as he put her into the armchair and unbuttoned her neat suède boots.

"You dear boy! Tea all ready, too!" Angela flashed a radiant smile at the tea-table as she removed her velvet hat and patted her sleek golden hair into place. "It *is* nice to be waited on and petted. Thanks ever so! Yes, you may take my things—don't stand the hat upside down, there's a dear. I'll make the tea."

"You'll do nothing of the kind," declared her husband. "I'm running this canteen. You snuggle down and I'll see to the tea and toast."

Over the teacups Geoff told her in a casual way of Mrs. Wilson's visit and postponed invitation.

"Seems they're coming to dinner to-morrow?" he added, selecting a cake with great deliberation.

"Yes, dear. You don't mind?"

The shade of apprehension in Angela's voice shamed Geoff into renewed penitence.

"Glad to see them!" he said, with a heartiness that banished the anxious look in the face bent so earnestly over the teapot.

Deep in her heart Angela voiced a mute thanksgiving that he had taken it so well. Only the thought of the two dress-circle tickets for *Touch and Go* reposing in her desk, the pink ninon frock hanging unused in the wardrobe upstairs, clouded her enjoyment of what might have been a perfect evening together.

Dreams That Came True.

Contrary to Geoff's expectations, the Wilsons' visit proved thoroughly enjoyable. Both Meg and her burly husband refrained from undue curiosity about the war. Angela had remembered all his pet dishes in planning the dinner, and the duties of host took him out of himself and brought back a trifle of his old buoyancy and *joie de vivre*. When the guests had gone, and Angela, full of sleepy content, betaken herself to bed, Geoff owned to himself as he sat down at the desk to write a long-postponed letter that perhaps, after all, a little gaiety would not come amiss.

He was rummaging in his disorderly, manlike way for a stamp when he made the discovery. There were no stamps in the tiny drawer, but there was an envelope containing several theatre tickets and a sheet of paper headed: "Geoff's Leave." Beneath was a plan of campaign for each day. Geoff sat with rigid face and remorseful eyes as he read the list. "Wednesday—Christmas shopping; tea at the Toast Rack Tearooms. *Touch and Go* at the Jollity." Well, he had done her out of that—there were the tickets, a mute reproach! "Thursday—Wilsons to dinner." That, at any rate, had not been cancelled. "Friday—Country walk; dinner at the Garland; *The Munition Maid* at the Duke's." He picked up the tickets, 10s. 6d. ones, bearing the next day's date. "Christmas Day—Home with Geoff," so the list continued. Geoff put it down reverently, a very gentle look softening the lines on his war-worn features.

"Dear little girl!" he murmured, cursing himself for a selfish brute. Through all her loving little plans he saw the solicitude for his enjoyment, his happiness, the effacing of self that his bliss might be complete. Angela didn't care for the Toast Rack Tearooms—but he had a weakness for their rather satisfying teacakes and scones. Light comedy was Angela's delight, but he had once gloried in revues—hence her choice. From first to last it was all planned for him—all her love had gone to the making of that programme, and he had, unknowing, flung it back in her face. All the same, funds would hardly have stood the racket; but then Angela, bless her! understood little of ways and means, so he argued in his blind manhood, forgetful of the new wisdom which the war has brought to so many inexperienced womenfolk.

He went up to bed resolved to make amends, to enter heart and soul, as far as finance permitted, into the remainder of the programme. Angela's mute sweetness, her utter lack of reproach at the doom of her cherished schemes, moved him unutterably. His wishes had been framed with no thought of her; hers had been dedicated in womanly love and devotion wholly to him. He tumbled into bed with that deep and exaggerated sense of his own unworthiness which comes to a man who recognises that he has failed, however unwittingly, in adequate response to the love of the woman he adores.

He woke earlier than usual, to find the cold grey dawn peeping in between the rose-bud-patterned curtains, and the bed beside his own empty. Angela was gone; her pale blue dressing-gown had vanished from the bed-rail, her little satin slippers were missing. In a moment Geoff was out of bed and pulling on his own dressing-gown and shoes. As he stepped out on the landing he heard a noise from the kitchen regions. Quietly

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he went downstairs, and softly opening the kitchen door, stepped in.

Angela was standing at the table, her hair falling in two gleaming plaits over her quilted silk dressing-gown. Her sleeves were turned up over her rounded arms, and her head bent over a small army of chocolates which she was carefully crowning with walnuts. She looked up as Geoff entered, and a queer little smile, half-relieved, half-startled, quivered on her face.

"Darling, what *are* you doing? Have you started a sweet-shop in my absence, or what?" Geoff's face had a gleam of its old boyish mischief as he surveyed the chocolates, the cardboard boxes, and scarlet ribbon.

"No—not that!" Angela shook her head. "It's just a little scheme of my own, a private venture to——" She paused, fearful of disclosing the loving plans which had, alas! never come to fruition.

"What is it, sweetheart?" Geoff came round and perched himself on the table beside her. "Were you out to make money, or what?"

"Yes," she replied, standing before him, and pulling nervously at one of the buttons on his dressing-gown, "I was. You see, I wanted you to have a good time, and I knew funds were low, so I hit on the plan of selling home-made sweets. People will always buy them at Christmas - I made quite a lot—I didn't know you wouldn't care for—for theatres or any gaiety of that sort. This order only came in yesterday, and I couldn't very well refuse. I never dreamt you'd wake so early."

"Bless you!" Geoff's arm went round her; he drew her towards him till she leant against his shoulder. "You make me feel a miserable cad, little girl. I saw your list when I was rummaging for a stamp, and I had a glimmering then of what an infernal beast I'd been."

"But you haven't!" Angela's blue eyes were very soft as she met his remorseful gaze. "The money was there in case it was needed. I only wanted you to enjoy yourself in your own dear way."

"Darling, what *are* you doing? Have you started a sweet-shop in my absence, or what?"

"And what about you?" inquired her husband. "Weren't you pining for a bit of gaiety? Well, you're going to have it.

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Henceforth that list is law. We're going to have the time of our lives, and hang the expense!"

"But do you feel up to it?" asked Angela with pretty solicitude.

"I feel up to anything with you," he declared. "I've been doing the fireside act to death. I thought it was rest I wanted to wipe out the horrors of war, but it was diversion. We'll go to *The Munition Maid* to-night, and we'll have dinner at Cardino's first—that's *my* affair—and you shall wear that shimmering white frock with the bits of silver on it."

"You'll like the new waist-belt; it's a heavenly blue," sighed Angela rapturously, her eyes fixed meditatively on her satin slippers.

"I know I shall," vowed Geoff, "though I like you in this rig-out with your hair down more than anything. But I say, darling, you're getting cold; let's clear up this bag of tricks, and hop back to bed for an hour."

Together they packed up the chocolates, and put away jars and pans, chattering like a pair of children the while.

All Geoff's depression had fallen from him; he was again his buoyant self, light-hearted and very lovable, though with a tinge of added depth and manliness which filled Angela with a sense of delicious security.

It was broad daylight when they went upstairs to the cosy chintz-hung bedroom. With one hand Angela held her blue dressing-gown about her bare white ankles; the other was clasped in Geoff's big brown one. Her wide blue eyes were serene and shining; her childish face with its little pointed chin was lit with a new radiance, the indefinable glory of a woman who knows that the man she loves above all others has come through ordeal by battle dowered with a higher, more splendid manhood than was his in the days before the war.

DOWN WEST.

Oh, the folks comes down from Lunnon Town,
An' thinks they're mighty grand;
They're main and free to laugh at we
As works upon the land;
An' Bill, as went a-sailorin',
Five year or more ago,
When 'e comes back, 'e ses we're slack,
An' country ways is slow.
For it's streets an' smoke for city folk,
An' the sailor for the sea,
But the creakin' share in the stubble bare,
An' the smell o' the earth for me!

There's a Royal crown in Lunnon Town,
Or so the people say,
But there ain't much air to breathe up there,
So I'd sooner stay away.
An' when Bill lands on 'is foreign strands,
An' pities the likes o' we,
We sits at 'ome, where there's no wet foam,
An' likewise pities 'e.
So the city folk can chaff an' joke,
An' the ships sail where they will,
But they all gives best to a farm down West,
Where we ploughs straight furrows still!

Anne Page.

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THE JOTTINGS OF A SUBALTERN.

I.—DOREEN.

These revelations of a young, refined, and sensitive nature have fallen into our hands, we dare not say how, and would not if we could. Shedding as they do a bright and shining light on the contemporary female, we ~~propose~~ to publish them to the bitter end, merely remarking that the writer's watchword seems to have been that deathless military expression "Carry On!"—*Ed.* R.M.

DOREEN, Doreen, how I love you! If I do not love you, my name is not Cosmo Vernon Lacy, Second-Lieutenant in the 31st Pinkshires, the gay, glad old poppy-shirts. But it is, and I am, so I do, and there you are.

It was with my heart full of all the proper instincts that I snooped lightheartedly on my T.T. Douglas down the main and only thoroughfare of Goosegreen Parva one delicious summer morning. It seemed to me that a small glass of something dry with bitters in it, and a biscuit, might stay me till luncheon. The lounge of the Goosegreen Arms, cool, and smelling of last century's beer, when beer, I understand, *was* beer, loomed gratefully before my mind's eye.

You will gather from this brief descriptive passage that girls waned far from my thoughts. Yet suddenly I forgot the aged inn, my hollow interior, everything worldly, and rode off on a wave of the purest sentiment a man can cherish for a maiden.

Doreen came out of the post-office.

Built in 1915, the post-office is of charming red brick. But this could not do it in on Doreen. How did I know she was *Doreen?* I didn't, but I found out afterwards, and I must call her something. Well, Doreen came out of the post-office, and my heart came off its seating up into my throat, and revved away there with the clutch out, as it were.

She was about sixteen and a-half hands, I suppose, a perfect topper. She had that ripping action that's given to about one girl in a million. She wore a coat and skirt of dark-blue linen—"some" garment, believe me, and the skirt came about midway between knee and ankle; I never saw such black silk stockings and patent slippers in my life. They were not that beastly thin silk that gets a girl's legs all sunburn, but the beautiful, rich, glossy kind that takes a high light, and if she has any fetlocks at all, makes them both simply great.

Her hat came down from heaven with the last rain, I should imagine. She had one of those small, cool, maddening faces, with a short, straight nose, and perfect little mouth. Her throat was all creamy white down into the V of her blouse. And she had two topping West Highlands with her, every bit as thoroughbred as herself.

I snatched back the throttle lever, gave my Gor'bli'mey cap a right incline, and sent a long, penetrating glance at Doreen. It was a glance trained to a hair, and absolute

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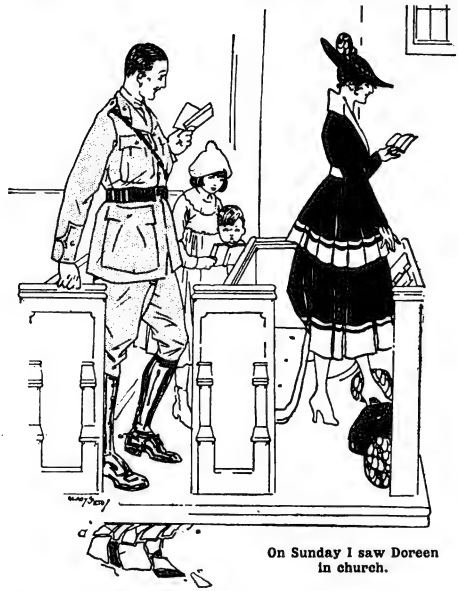

On Sunday I saw Doreen in church.

waste. She moved on as if I were a fly on the wall or a pelican in the wilderness. There was less than nothing doing. The attack had failed.

The men must have known I was hard hit. All that afternoon I could say nothing but "Sar-Major, take that man's name!" I tried to lose my sorrows in smartening up the troop. They seemed a lot of web-footed blighters. Love is a wonderful thing! For six mornings I met Doreen coming out of the post-office. Almost I feared she drew a separation allowance, but I asked my sergeant and he told me a married woman only drew it once a week. So I chirped up a little, but for the life of me I couldn't get any nearer knowing her. My bridge game went simply putrid, and the men almost jumped before the words were out of my mouth.

On Sunday I saw Doreen in church. On Monday I went to a beastly bazaar and spent five quid on embroidered braces and things that I gave my servant for his missus or something. He seemed to think them rather posh. But Doreen avoided me even at a bazaar, where any idiot is fair game, and trotted around with the Colonel who is well on in the sere and yellow. Fact!

After a fortnight of this sort of thing, when the M.O. began to look asquint at me and I'd almost applied for permission to take out the next draft, a blue-eyed miracle happened.

I got to know Doreen.

Had I not been stricken down with love it would never have occurred. I was walking through a lonely wood, running over the clauses of my will and dotting down a few quids to give coal and blankets to the almshouses at home, when I heard a stifled cry. It seemed to come from above, so I glanced upward and beheld—Doreen!

The reason for the cry became simple as A B C. Doreen had climbed joyfully up into a young monarch of the forest, lost her nerve, and couldn't get down.

Swiftly I saluted and began the reassuring act. I was as solemn as a chaplain at church parade because of my love, but really the sight was awfully funny. Doreen seemed quite unconscious that as I helped her down into my strong young

Even at a bazaar, where any idiot is fair game, she avoided me and trotted around with the Colonel, who is well on in the sere and yellow.

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"Thank you," she said, giving her hair an instinctive pat. "Thank you, Mr.—er—um—ah?"

arms she exhibited yards and yards of leg in those magnificent silk stockings.

"Thank you," she said simply, giving her hair those instinctive pats a girl always does. "Thank you, Mr.—er—um—ah?"

She waited. But I had caught sight of a ripping name bracelet, so I replied huskily—I always husk when I'm in love:

"Doreen, dear, I will be Cosmo or Vernon, just which you like, but not Mr. anything. What are surnames to such as we?"

A little, naughty smile stole over her face.

"Very well, Vernon. I can't call you Cosmo—it sounds like tooth paste, or a juggling turn on the music-halls. You have saved me, and that shall be your reward."

We turned and walked away together.

I shall never forget that night, for all this happened in the afternoon. I borrowed old Slobyear's—the Major's—thirty-horse Monobox two-seater and took Doreen into the cloistered old cathedral town of Minsterbridge to dinner at the Moonstone Hotel (A.A.; R.A.C.). We loitered back about nine, for I knew she was not that sort of girl, you understand. Ah, heaven! if I had really known! Well——

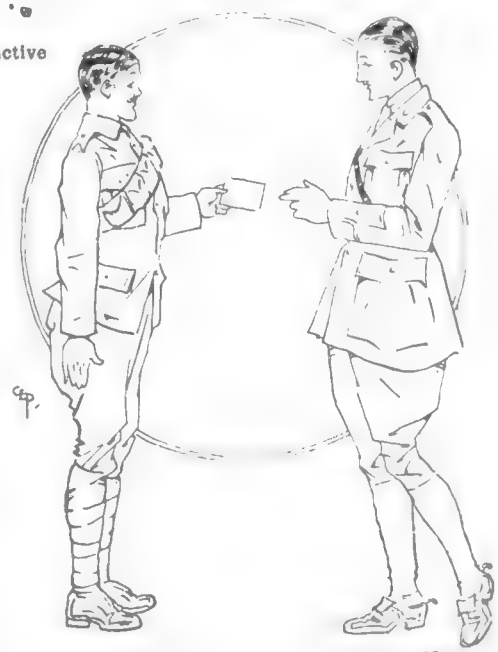
At the bend of the lane leading into Goosegreen Parva I kissed Doreen—once. For a second she yielded, her lithe young form against mine, her perfect lips just parted, her eyes closed. It lasted about ninety-six feet of film and then she broke away.

"*Attention!*" she cooed in French—just like that. She seemed a little cross—not very—though there was a hint of amusement behind.

"Really, Vernon, considering my father is going to be a general," she went on, "I hardly think you—a mere sub—are keeping quite in your place. Take me home, please! Mother will be getting anxious."

Subdued to the marrow I drove home. Fancy falling head over heels in love with a general's daughter, and kissing her in a borrowed car! He might be the new Brigadier, due in the morning. Thunder and guns!

I took farewell on Doreen's doorstep a little warily. She let me hold her wee hand a fair while. Then she



When I got back to tea, my servant, stifling a grin, put a scented letter into my hand. [Page 136, col. 1.]

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said "Good-night!" and whisked indoors. I fancied I caught a giggle. I may have been right.

You see, you never know where you are with women. I have been a perfect dog among the girls for years—ever since I was sixteen, and have been to supper with peaches from the *revues* at Cirage's several pinky nights, and yet I cannot always be certain—even I. As I strolled back to the mess I was the prey of mingled thoughts. There is an acidity about generals not found elsewhere when they take a dislike to one.

Next morning no Doreen came out of the post-office, and the new Brigadier went through us like the devil in a high wind. I came back to tea exhausted, and my servant put a scented letter into my hand, stifling a grin.

DARLING VERNON (it ran),

I send you this to put you out of your pain, for I've gone back to Town for rehearsals, and you will never see me again in Goosegreen Parva. My father who is a general is my stage father in the new revue, *Button Sticks*, at the Festivity Theatre. He is nothing to do with your new Brigadier.

It was nice of you to rescue me from the tree. I was rehearsing one of my new scenes. I had no one to rehearse with till you came along. As you seem a connoisseur in silk stockings and so on, I will send you two stalls for the first night of *Button Sticks*. I thank you for the dinner and the kiss. You did the best you could over the dinner, but the kiss was a shade amateurish.

Yours always charitably,

DOREEN DARRACOTT.

So here you have it—the *dénouement*, the frost, the give-away, the hopeless dawn, or whatever you like to call it. Never mind what I called it—words are a gift with me.

How was it I never recognised her—I who have worshipped her from afar? But they look so different off the stage. Ah, heaven, if I had only known! But I've had those stalls all right. I think I shall take old Slobyear. After all, it was in his car. . . .

(Another episode in the Subaltern's light-hearted career appears next month.)

BALLADE OF BETTY.

Dear lady of the dreaming eyes,
The roses bloom, the roses blow;
Autumn is here and summer flies,
And yet you will not speak, you know.
The withered sunflowers stand arow—
Luckless in camp the gardener lies!—
Say, will you dash me down below,
Or raise me, shouting, to the skies?

It is my heart, my heart that cries;
I trouble not how ebb and flow
The numbers of our good Allies,
How boastfully the Bosnians bo,
How loud the clamorous Kaiser crow
(He is *so* noisy for his size!)—
Say, will you dash me down below,
Or raise me, shouting, to the skies?

No amorous Orient scent outvies
Your scented hair I worship so.
Your footstep mocks the bird that flies;
I love to watch you come and go,
A princess moving to and fro,
Set on some splendid, great emprise,
Say, will you dash me down below,
Or raise me, shouting, to the skies?

ENVOI.

Princess, in youth love learns to grow—
Ah! do not linger till he dies!
Say, will you dash me down below,
Or raise me, shouting, to the skies?

F. E. B.

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"AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING—"

By Frank St. Austell.

"Not once or twice in our rough island story,
The path of duty was the way to glory."

I.

The boy lay on the hillside, staring into the late September sunset.

Subconsciously he seemed to drink in the blue-mist beauty of the distant woods, their leaves already turning in that strange loveliness of autumn, like first threads of grey in the hair of a beautiful woman, whispering of twilight and eternal sleep. A little breeze bore to him the faint, smoky scent which tells of departed summer. All round as far as he could see stretched the stubble fields, and the rickyards were full.

He blended with his surroundings as only those can who live under the open sky and love the earth, and understand the secrets of seedtime and harvest. His weather-stained clothes seemed a perfect epitome of Nature's soft browns and greys. In his steady blue eyes brooded the peace of the hills and valleys where he was born, and on his cheeks the golden down of early youth glowed faintly against the tanned skin.

He was thinking the slow, sure, methodical thoughts of the countryman.

"I'm quite old enough to go. The harvest's carried, and father doesn't need me any longer. I'm strong and hearty, I can do a man's work, and there's men's work to be done for England to-day. Mother'd break her heart perhaps, but there's many another heart breaking, and she wouldn't have me hang back. I wonder what Marjie will say? I shall never find another girl to equal Marjie. She's a farmer's daughter, and she'd make a real farmer's wife. I don't want to leave the old place, but there's something stirring in the air, stirring in the world."

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Far away in the valley the sweet, wild notes of a bugle came thrilling up on the still air. He raised his head and listened, breathless, a light in his blue eyes. He did not hear the approaching footsteps of a girl, who swung easily up the slope with the free gait of the countryside, and paused a moment before settling herself on the grass beside him.

"Well, Dick," she said, in the soft, slow speech of her race, "dreaming again? You're a rare boy for dreams lately. You seem to live in the clouds. Aren't you going to look at me and say you're glad I came? I've had a rare hurry to get away, with all the butter to make up!"

He turned and laid a hand on her shoulder. A townsman might have passed her without a second glance, but in her own way she was beautiful. Beauty lay in her soft eyes, her rounded, strong-limbed young body, her simple, direct soul, and the promise of being a mother of men.

"Marjie," he began slowly, "Marjie, don't be short with me. A man's mind is a medley of thoughts these days. It's hard to know what's best to do, but I think I've got to go."

"Go where?" she demanded swiftly. With her woman's instinct for adversity she knew, and, womanlike, would not be content till he told her.

"The Army."

"But you're so young, and—and your mother would fret herself to death."

"I know. But there it is—I feel I ought to do it, and when a man feels that——"

"You're only a boy yet," she interrupted, and the breast of her cotton frock began to rise and fall quickly. "You've got a boy's fickleness, and you'll be sorry for it presently. You ought to think of others besides yourself, and if you don't care for your mother you might think of me. I—don't want you to go."

His face clouded slowly, and a faint hint of the countryman's stubbornness showed through. But he put an arm tenderly round her shoulders and drew her, rigid and half resisting, to his side.

"Don't be hard on me, Marjie dear. We've been true sweethearts, and will remain so. You wouldn't have me stay behind?"

"They'll take you fast enough when they need you. It isn't duty makes you want to go—it's a boy's restless ways. You want the excitement and the uniform, and it's well enough for you, but it's only women understand war. The men we love and the men we bear go away and never come back, and we sit at home and grow old with grief waiting for someone who never comes. Soldiers? I hate soldiers! If you're a soldier I never want to see you again."

He stroked her hair with clumsy, baffled fingers. A passion of tears mystified him. He could only say: "There—there—I love you, Marjie. Don't cry, dear," and wonder why she still cried. Finally she got up, dried her eyes, and put away her handkerchief.

"Remember what I've told you," she said slowly, a quiet figure of grief. "Remember it's women who pay the price, and women who know. Nothing will stop a man once he's got the madness—he'd go over his own wife's body—but don't say you didn't know what you were doing. Don't say I never told you. Good-night, Dick."

She turned, and before he could kiss her she had gone, running like a wild thing, lest he should see her face and know how much she loved him.

When he came slowly into the farmhouse kitchen, with its big, old-fashioned grate and the sides of bacon hanging from the ceiling, his mother put aside her mending and busied herself with his supper. He ate in silence, and she watched him furtively, full of a mother's cunning. A mother's fear, that is never far away, clutched at her heart with icy fingers.

At last he rose, kissed her good-night with the earnest self-consciousness of youth, and left her to watch and pray.

Up in the bedroom, which had been his from childhood, every stick of furniture excited that curious interest which long-familiar things take on when we are about to part with them perhaps for ever. There were the model yacht of his school-days, the stuffed head of a favourite dog, the gun his father had given him on his fourteenth birthday. His heart seemed to rise into his throat and choke him. This big step he had determined to take was going to cost a great deal, it seemed. . . .

II.

He found that he could not sleep. All the things and places he had loved from childhood seemed full of mute reproach. Getting up, he put on his clothes and slipped out of the house.

It was midnight. The harvest moon bathed the whole countryside in silver. Except for the soft crunch of grazing horses not a sound broke the stillness. Slowly he climbed the hill where Marjie had left him so bitterly, sat down, and began once more to dream.

Once again the sound of quick footsteps dulled by the turf startled him. He looked up to see a swarthy man of middle height standing before him like no man he had ever known. Yet in some unfathomable fashion

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his appearance suggested the boy himself, older, harder, a proud man. The stranger's hair was dark where it showed beneath his helmet. His beaked nose and fierce face matched his martial garb, his buckler, the sword girt upon his loins, and his bow. He had the quick, piercing glance of the seasoned soldier, and the ornaments upon his person betokened high rank.

Mechanically the boy rose and stood clumsily to attention.

"Who are you, sir?" he stammered, without knowing why.

The other gripped his bow and showed his strong white teeth in a haughty smile.

"You are going to be a soldier," he said in quick, terse accents. "We always know, we who have gone before. We live again in you. There is always rejoicing over newcomers to the great trade of war. I will tell you a little because you are, without knowing it, a young man of promise. Yet you have much to learn, and the learning is hard."

"Who are you?" murmured the boy again.

"I am one of the captains of David, King of Israel, one of his mighty men of valour," answered the stranger haughtily. "I have seen many battles, unlike those of this time, perhaps, yet battles are always the same. They are won by suffering, and they that can suffer most divide the spoil."

The stranger's hair was dark where it showed beneath his helmet. His beaked nose and fierce face matched his martial garb, his buckler, the sword girt upon his loins, and his bow.

He seemed to become taller as he spoke, and pride radiated from him.

"Ah!" he went on, "how we smote the

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"I fought in an age of marvels. I served with Hamilcar in Sicily, and fought afterwards against the Barbarians, who nearly overwhelmed Carthage."

Philistines in my day. They were never a match for us. They had no discipline compared with ours. Besides, they were idolators, and we the chosen of Jehovah. We put them to the edge of the sword. Yet I see there is sorrow in your heart."

"My mother will grieve for me and my sweetheart is sad already, and I shall leave my home that I love," murmured the boy, and tears came into his eyes.

The warrior laughed, and his laugh was like the sound of a trumpet blown in battle.

"Your captain will be your father and your mother, and the regiment will be your home. In the beginning you will contend with your discipline, and your heart will be hot within you and then turn to water. But the long marches will toughen you and the camp fires at the end of the day comfort you. A soldier has no business with these childish regrets. They are only suitable for women."

"I love my sweetheart," retorted the boy stubbornly. "If there is no love in a soldier's life I do not want to be a soldier."

The other laughed till the arrows rattled in his quiver.

"Do you suppose a soldier ever lacks love?" he asked scornfully. "It is not slave love such as that to which you have been accustomed—a sighing and groaning because of some woman's tormenting, begging like a dog for some little favour. The soldier comes as a conqueror to whom all things are given, and among the conquered there are always many women. They hear him and obey. His lightest wish is law. If he chooses that they should make a pathway for him of their bodies, it is well. Even the last-joined recruit can lord it over a damsel or two."

The boy caught his breath. For an instant he saw in his mind's eye a victorious foe marching across the countryside and Marjie in the arms of the victors. Then the imagination of a young man took fire, and he saw himself toying with beautiful captives.

The haughty voice of the Hebrew warrior, so strangely like the boy in appearance, broke in again.

"Ah, those Philistine girls! They were worth a man's while, red-lipped, slow-voiced sorceresses who gave unwillingly always with mute rebellion in their dark eyes. I have caused them to be whipped into submission before now, but not often. They were even better than fighting for a while, but that sort of thing soon wearies a man."

A mist seemed to rise up from the ground, and the boy saw him less distinctly. But the fierce, commanding voice rang out still.

"Remember you will be a man among

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men, and that you are not to disgrace the rest, your forefathers. They will not be such men as we have known—the Tachmonite that sat in the seat chief among the captains, who lifted up his spear against eight hundred whom he slew at one time. Aye, and Benaiah, the son of Jehoida, who slew two lionlike men of Moab, and went down and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow. . . ."

The boy shivered and found himself alone. For a little while he slept, and stirred only when a new voice fell on his ears.

He looked up to see again a dark-haired soldier, clad in a cuirass and shoulder pieces, and the bronze cothurnes of a Carthaginian captain.

"Welcome, young warrior," said the new comer, and again his appearance vaguely resembled that of the boy. "Yours will be the oldest and the finest trade in the world. I envy you, but, of course, your service will be nothing to compare with mine. I fought in an age of marvels. I served with Hamilcar in Sicily, and fought afterwards against the Barbarians, who nearly overwhelmed Carthage.

"You will never know such a feast as we prepared to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Eryx — antelopes, peacocks, sheep cooked whole in wine, legs of camels, fried grasshoppers, and sweetmeats innumerable. And you will never serve in such a mingled army. We had Gauls and Greeks and Negroes, and all kinds of people. I have lived such a life as falls to few men, I can tell you, but then think who was my general—Hamilcar, the father of Hannibal. Hannibal was the man who led his army about Italy for years after he was cut off, and the Romans had won the command of the sea, you know, and beat them time after time. My son was at Cannae and the battle of the Trasimene Lake. But I was talking about myself."

"Go on," exclaimed the boy, in his dreams. He felt as if wide awake by now. "Did you never regret leaving your home and your parents and your sweetheart?"

The captain shook his head, and took on a wise expression.

"Thirst is a soldier's

There came to him a clean-shaven short man in the kit of a Roman legionary. . . . "I served under Cæsar, and that is something to brag about over a helmetful of red wine," he said. *[Page 142, col. 1.]*

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great trial," he said. "If you ever march across the desert as I have, you will know. But then you will never see the wonders I have seen. You will never witness a charge of elephants, for instance. And you will never take part in anything to compare with our final victory over the Barbarians, when we exterminated them under the walls of Carthage. Narr' Havas helped us with that business, and he was to wed Hamilcar's daughter, only she died. Ah, those were great days, great days. War is not war any longer. Why, in that battle the Etruscans were fastened together by a bronze chain, and the dead were almost as much of an obstacle to us as the living. . . ."

Again the boy slept, and again he dreamt. This time there came to him a clean-shaven short man in the kit of a Roman legionary. And this man also seemed not unlike him in some undefined manner. He wore a helmet, breastplate, greaves, and shield—the shield on the left arm and the sword on the right hip out of its way. His feet were shod with hobnailed leather boots, and in his right hand he carried a javelin between six and seven feet long.

"I suppose you are going into the ranks," he began, "so I daresay I can tell you one or two useful things. I soldiered in Gaul, where you are going, and a filthy campaign it was, too. Cæsar had to clear out the Germani in my time, and now you are doing it over again. Well, well, they always turn to us to do the hard work.

"You mustn't think you'll make your fortune in the Army. It can't be done on 225 denarii a year—that's £8 of your money. But in the days of the Republic—that was during my service—all citizens had to serve between the ages of 17 and 46, and in a legion you got your discharge in twenty years, or after sixteen campaigns.

"We used to have a 45 lb. pack, and that takes it out of you marching fifteen miles a day. But then I served under Cæsar, and that is something to brag about over a helmetful of red wine," he said.

"I suppose it is," murmured the boy, in his dreams, looking curiously at the javelin. The legionary caught his eye.

"This is a pretty weapon," he said affectionately. "It weighs nine pounds as you would put it, and a good man can throw it a hundred feet. The head is of soft iron so that it bends where it has hit the mark, and the enemy can't pick it up and throw it back. But this is the Legion's favourite arm."

He drew out his short stabbing sword, two feet long—two-edged, and pointed. "This is the tool with which we carved out history. Ask the Germani about it. Mayhap their children's children still remember."

The boy fingered it lovingly and handed it back. The Roman drew off his shield and cover, and showed the numeral.

"Mine was the tenth Legion—*Decima Legio*," he went on proudly. "Cæsar himself has told you about us. But then he was a general if you like. I remember during the hottest fighting I was ever in, against the Nervii, when P. Sextius Baculus was mentioned in dispatches, and we had brought up the last reserves, the whole line would have given way except for Cæsar. He snatched a shield from a man, having come without one, and rushed right into the thick of things, opened up the ranks, and then we got our own back a little. One does rather more than one's best under the general's eye, you know."

He replaced the cover on the shield, and shrugged his equipment back into its place.

"But, after all," he ended, "there's nowhere like Rome. There's no wine in the world like the good old Falernian, and there are no women like the women one finds in Rome. I've served my twenty years, and got my *Missio Honesta*—my discharge with a clean sheet that is—so I know. You can take my word for it."

Last there came to the boy a man in the shako and breeches of the British infantry of a hundred years ago. The strips of side-whisker down his face and the lean hardness of it gave him a gaunt, fierce expression his merry blue eyes belied. They were very much like the blue eyes of the boy. He spat thoughtfully, and stared down at the dreamer.

"Going to join, are you?" he queried in the dialect of the neighbourhood. "I'm glad the old place still sends lads to the Army, though it's a dog's life. Going in the infantry I take it—none of these new-fangled sorts of fighting, flying in the air, and such. We're the backbone of the service, boy. Nothing can take a position except infantry, and they know it. I've seen some fighting—all through the Peninsula, Salamanca, Talavera, Badajoz, and the rest of it. Lord, the Spanish girls I kissed while we were on the track of Boney and the Spanish wine I've drunk! Heady stuff it is till you get used to it, but I could drink a bucket of it in my day."

"Used you to live here then?" queried the boy.

"Worked on this very farm. Your great-grandfather had it then—gave me a guinea when I went to the wars. He was a gentleman he was—one of the old school. My mother took on about it though."

"So will mine," said the boy sorrowfully.

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"You'll get over all that. By the time you've slept rough a few months, never in the same place twice, you'll have forgotten you ever had a mother. Your sergeant'll look after you. Mine did; died of fever in Spain, too, poor old boy. Well, the best men go first, and we all go sooner or later. Let me give you two bits of advice—look after your feet and look after your gun. You'll need both. Good luck."

For an hour the boy lingered in the moonlight. Then he crept home and slept, taking his dreams with him. Sometimes they are all the comfort a man has.

III.

In the morning he told his parents. His father wrung his hand silently, and then became aggressively cheerful. His mother cried quietly, and began to put a few things together that he would take with him. He went out and wandered round the farm saying good-bye to all the dear home things — his pony, the men who knew him, the familiar places. They had never seemed so dear before.

At last it was time to go, and as he pleaded they let him go alone. At the bend of the lane, out of sight of the house, Marjie waited for him. Her eyes were red, but they held no tears. She would speed him forth dry-eyed.

"Good-bye, darling," she murmured, her lips against his. "Go, since you must go, and remember me, and write to me, and, above all, come back. Promise me you'll come back."

He kissed her and promised he would come back. After he had left her, too, a curious intoxication came over him, stimulating, exhausting, and very evanescent. The recruiting office looked very bare and unattractive, but no doubt it represented the first step on the path of duty. And what were those words he had read somewhere?

"Not once or twice
in our rough island story
The path of duty
was the way to
glory."

Last there came to the boy a man in the shako and breeches of the British infantry of a hundred years ago. . . . "I've seen some fighting—all through the Peninsula, Salamanca, Talavera, Badajoz, and the rest of it."

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And youth loves glory. Thence they passed him on to his depôt.

At first he cursed Destiny and writhed in the spirit. Being a wild bird caged for the first time, he hungered for the free hills, and, instead, he got drill and fatigues. Then they drafted him to his regiment, and his N.C.O.'s were his friends who taught him patiently the things he needed to know. He began to rejoice in staying out the long marches, in his bronzed fitness, in the crash of the band at the head of the regiment. And after the day's work, washed, shaved, in clean service dress with puttees, boots, and buttons cleaned, he delighted to walk out, and the town girls turned their heads to look at him.

Of course, he loved Marjie; she wrote to him often, and he wrote to her sometimes. But she was far away, and the pretty girls did not turn their heads in vain.

Out on the heather-clad commons that circled the town, on his free afternoons and evenings the boy took his first real kisses—burning, fierce, and passionate, such as he had never dreamt of. Yet afterwards they seemed reminiscent; he had a vague feeling that all this must have occurred somewhere before. Anyhow, it was very sweet. He had nearly forgotten Marjie, and his mother watched vainly for the postman.

Presently they made him a corporal, for the Army seemed to come naturally to him. He had the soldier's instinct. Overseas he soon became a sergeant. The officers trusted him, and in night work his country instincts stood him in good stead.

Sometimes he almost started to find himself doing the right thing like a veteran of many campaigns. War appeared strangely familiar, which was impossible, of course.

He was a sergeant-major now, in the running for a commission. About this time the grand attack took place with his battalion in the van. They sprang over with a rush, seasoned troops, each man knowing exactly what to do.

One by one the officers went down. Presently the Sergeant-Major found himself alone, rallying demoralised troops. And a great pride surged up in his heart, so that he became capable of impossible things.

In one swift second his dream on the hillside at home came back to him, and the truth flashed through his brain.

"I've done it all before," he shrieked in the cracked voice of battle-madness. "In other lives *I* smote the Philistines, *I* exterminated the Barbarians, *I* cleared out the Germani, and *I* fought for England—England—ENGLAND in the great old days, so little beside the present. And, by God, we'll do it again to-day. The 170th never goes back. Come on you ——'s. On to the swine! Give 'em hell! They can't stop you! They—can't—stop—US! At 'em, boys. Oh—my—God. . . ."

IV.

Out of the long night of pain he came back with a sense of utter flatness to the commonplace of every day. The hospital ward mocked him in its inane neatness and little routine. He had awakened from an indescribably glorious spiritual drink, drained of every spark of vitality, minus a foot, shorn of a career, left high and dry by the ebbing tide of war.

By and bye they sent him home, and his mother fussed and cried over him. He, who had been and seen, lived with real men, and watched them die, endured the pitifully bombastic horrors of village admiration and hero-worship. They made his soul sick, but what could he do? He had left his soul and a foot out in France. He could not run away, yet he could still suffer. But Marjie seemed always to hover round, never sympathising openly, yet in her silent way interposing a barrier of quiet compassion between him and the world.

At last, one evening he determined to escape, and, with her beside him, hobbled on crutches up to the crest of his hill of dreams. The strange loveliness of autumn again clothed the distant woods, and seemed to harmonise with his mood. There was only one long autumn before him now.

Then his heart, his fearless soldier's heart, broke, and the tears streamed down his face. A wonderful expression of pure unselfishness stole into Marjie's eyes. Quietly she gathered his head to her breast, and with little incoherent tendernesses soothed him until his grief was hushed, and peace stole over him.

Lying very still, he looked up at the clear sky, jewelled with infrequent stars. He thought of the past year, the women he had known, his unfaithfulness, and her innocence.

Then he sat up and took her to his heart, very gently, very tenderly.

"Marjie," he said slowly, "I don't deserve you, but I had to go away and suffer to find it out."

Then he stooped and kissed her, and it ran like fire through her veins to have him humble himself for her.

"It's taken me a long time to learn, and I nearly went West before I did learn it," he murmured into her hair. "And now, if she will only let me, I will stay so gladly with my dear best friend for ever and ever in this world and every other."

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For "Soldiers and Sailors Too"

All the contributions on this page were sent in by officers and men serving in H.M. Forces. A pack of ROYAL playing-cards or a silver pencil-case is given for every accepted storyette, joke, bit of verse, or drawing sent in by a sailor or soldier. Please say which gift you prefer, and address envelopes to The O.C., ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

ROBBED ON THE PREMISES.

At a cer ain Italian city, some months ago, shortly after the arrival of a British ship, a man came aboard with business cards advertising a café. Of course, the usual tariffs were set forth, etc., and as a further inducement for Britishers to patronise the café, it concluded with the following words:

"A little English stuttered. Don't go elsewhere to be robbed; come here."

RISES ALL ROUND.

An old sea captain was sitting by the sea, listening to the experiences of a young sailor. It was evident from the expression on the old "salt's" face that he did not believe all that was being told him, and at last he interrupted:

"Don't come here telling me your cock-and-bull yarns about waves being a hundred feet high! Why, I was at sea for fifty years, and sailed in rougher weather than you'll ever see, but I've never known waves no higher than fifty feet."

"Ah!" said the young sailor, "but see how everything's gone up since the war."

GOT HIM THAT TIME.

The recruit had been trying in vain to hit the target, amidst the burly Sergeant's loud recriminations. Presently the Sergeant threw down his field glasses and shouted:

"Hurrah! you've hit the bull at last!"

A bright flush of victory spread over the face of the youngster as he grabbed the fallen glasses and peered through. "I cannot see my mark on the target at all!" he said, the smile on his face vanishing.

"Target be blowed!" roared the Sergeant. "Can't you see the bull you hit lying in the next field with its legs in the air?"

MORE THAN HE BARGAINED FOR.

BILL: "The Kaiser is having an action brought against a big pickle firm, so I hear."

JOE: "Oh! Wot's it all about?"

BILL: "Just afore the war, he sent an order for a large consignment of gherkins, but they sent him Ghurkas, and they're too 'ot."

ANOTHER AIR RAID.

The hair of Private Jones was becoming painfully thin on top. Hence it was that at frequent intervals during the day and before retiring to bed at night he carefully combed, brushed, and massaged with well-advertised lotions those precious strands that were left.

His friend in the corner, after seeing three or four of these gardening operations in about as many hours, at last became disgusted and growled out: "Hallo, another 'air raid!"

BOWLED OUT.

It was after our fighting against the Senoussi on Christmas Day. A New Zealand non-commissioned officer was making his way to a British warship to procure for the men some tobacco and cigarettes. On his way he was halted by a British officer, who asked him where he was going.

"I'm going aboard to get some tobacco for my platoon," said the soldier.

"You're a New Zealander, aren't you?" asked the officer.

"Yes, sir," replied the man.

"Well, it's like your impudence," said the officer. "You New Zealanders are more trouble to us than the whole British Army."

"That's what the Senoussi say, sir," replied the soldier gravely.

"Carry on!" said the officer, with a smile, as he waved his arm towards the ship.

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MY FIRST CHRISTMAS

By Jessie Pope.

"The world has no such flower in any land,
And no such pearl in any gulf the sea,
As any babe on any mother's knee."

7.30. Wake, and find all dark, except a little hazy light coming in at the window. Feel a bit hazy myself. Uncertain who and what I am. Squirm about to make sure. Steady rumbling sound near by, stops with a snort; heavy human hand pats my person and sleepy voice murmurs: "Go by-bye, Baby—by-bye, Baby, by-bye, Ba-by." Oh, of course! Remember now! She's Nanna; I'm Baby, and this is my first Christmas!

7.35. Hand-patting ceases and rumbling continues: "Go by-bye, indeed," with that empty feeling in the place where my sash ought to be! Not likely!

7.40. Just preparing to stop her concert with a solo of my own when discover several other bedfellows in crib. Cheek! I may be only a baby, but I'm boss of my own crib, anyhow. Take intruders on in a boxing match, put in some fine footwork as well, and have the satisfaction of hearing several thuds on floor. Get rid of them all except one. Growing light shows him to be ghastly-looking monster with black face, wild hair, and gleaming teeth. Howl for help.

8.0. Nanna struggles heavily out of bed, pulls up blind as door opens, and pretty girl named "Mummy," with long, fair pigtail and pale blue dressing-gown, runs in and snatches me up and stops my wide-open mouth with kisses. From what I gather in the kitchen, Mummy ran away and got married without her father's consent, but doesn't seem much the worse for it.

"A merry Christmas, my little sunshine!" she says. "What's she crying for, Nanna, and where are all her Christmas toys?"

"A bit fretty this morning, Mum," says Nanna. "Glad you didn't 'ave 'er last night. You wouldn't 'ave slep' a wink. She's kicked all 'er toys on the floor an' broke 'er horse an' 'er Father Christmas, and now she's gone an' took a turn against 'er Auntie's Golliwog, bless 'er 'eart!"

"You mustn't cry on Christmas morning, sunshine," says pretty girl, "or else Mummy will cry too, with Daddy so far away, and I haven't heard from him for three days. Why, Nanna, I believe she's hungry!" Mummy may be a bit of a flapper with blue eyes and no experience, but she understands my symptoms every time.

8.15. Plays with me while Nanna mixes bottle. Puts up a fight between velvet rabbit and Golliwog for my benefit. Quite a good show, rabbit winning, hands down. Laugh heartily.

8.25. Nanna arrives at half-time with refreshment. Lose interest in sport. Clutch at bottle hastily with both hands and get

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neck well in my mouth. Choke. Have another shot. Settle down steadily to work, while Flapper Mummy preaches me a Christmas sermon.

"Now, Baby, you've got to be good all day, because Daddy's two Aunties are coming, and if you're cross they'll say you take after me."

"Spiteful cats!" remarks Nanna over her shoulder; "a pity you asked them, Mum."

"I didn't," says Mummy. "They said they'd come and cheer me in my loneliness, I couldn't say no. So we've got to make the best of it. And I mustn't forget to get out the biscuit-box they gave us, and put it in a prominent place, so that they'll think we always have it there on show."

"Considering you'd got one biscuit-box already," grumbles Nanna, "they might 'ave give you something else."

"Well, they didn't know that," said Mummy. "And, Nanna, *I'll* bath Baby today, because they are sure to ask, and I know they think I can't do anything. They told me I didn't look domesticated when I was married. I don't see how one can in white satin and orange-blossoms, do you, sunshine? But I want them to think my baby is the very nicest in the world so you will be a sport, won't you?"

Arrest flow of nourishment for a moment, to give her a milky and reassuring smile; receive a lot of kisses in return—clutch the loose curls on each side of her face in both fists; but Mummy's a flapper, thank goodness, and appreciates a joke.

9.0. Play with toes by nursery fire as good as gold while Nanna gets her breakfast and Mummy dresses. Find indiarubber cat with squeak in it quite an amusing and suckable companion.

9.30. Postman's knock. Nanna bolts downstairs and comes back with her particular plunder—two or three letters and parcels. Soldier boys, I expect. Tears them open in frantic hurry. Something bright and shiny drops on rug close by; crawl towards it and carry it to my gums—curious flavour but cooling.

"Just like Bill!" exclaims Nanna. "Says 'e's sending me a button, and 'e's forgot to put it in. 'Opes I'll wear it always for 'is sake. So I would if 'e'd give me the chance, the juggins!" Edge of shiny object catches on inflamed gum. Howl dismally. Prompt return of Mummy, hair up and dressed.

"Ought to 'ave put a little dill-water in 'er bottle, Mum," says Nanna, pushing letters on one side. "It's 'er teeth wot's troublin' 'er."

"Let's give her a drop now," says Mummy, seizing teaspoon. "Oh, Nanna, what has she got in her mouth?"

"Blest if it ain't Bill's button!" cries Nanna, prising open my jaws and extracting souvenir. "Oh, ain't it a beauty?" Mummy looks distressed.

"It's nearly killed Baby!" she says. "You should be careful."

"Lor', Mum, look," exclaims Nanna, "she's got a tooth through! Well, if that isn't a bit of luck, to cut 'er first tooth on Christmas Day on a soldier's button!"

Everybody pleased but me, and even I feel decided relief in aching gum, and lie on back practising my latest achievement of drumming heels on floor and spluttering out lips at the same time. Quite a popular turn—always goes down well. No doubt about it, I *am* a good baby when they give me a chance.

10.30. Arrival of bath and Mummy in big apron. Nanna gets all ready and leaves us to it—dinner business in kitchen requiring assistance. Water rather hot, but Mummy a good deal hotter by the time she's finished. Find I've got a soft job on—Nanna a much sterner disciplinarian. Mummy's too afraid of breaking me in half or drowning me. Take full advantage of situation. Suck the sponge, try to swallow the soap, and, when she retrieves it, fling myself backwards with a sudden splash that nearly drowns us both.

The sight of beads of perspiration mingling with bath-water on her distressed face, however, fills me with remorse, and, remembering that she's not much more than a kid herself, submit to be dressed without undue resistance, which, considering the number of strings and buttons, requires no little self-control. Clothes seem to grow smaller every day, and shrinkage in bibs a positive scandal.

10.30. Arrival of bath and Mummy in big apron.

11.30. Toilet completed at last (best white frock, pink tie-ups, and coral beads—rather nutty, what!),

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and conveyed by proud parent to mistletoe in hall and kissed by her and Nanna and the kitchen person. Trying process. Don't object to a little natural affection, but decline to be practically devoured by three ravenous females, without registering my protest.

Am mollified by being swung from Nanna to kitchen person six times without stopping. Kick and chuckle vociferously while Mummy fetches photograph of good-looking young officer in khaki, who I am informed is Daddy, and I have got to kiss him under the mistletoe. Mummy's blue eyes grow rather misty, so oblige with my best slobber in the middle of his tunic.

11.45. Wrapped and tucked into pram in garden. Mummy too busy to take me out. Nice and sunny for time of year, but object to be turned out of doors on Christmas Day. About to express my feelings in the usual way, when bottle suddenly appears from nowhere. Prospect grows rosier. Watch birds hopping in bare branches overhead; try to catch them in my hands, but haven't got the range somehow. Give it up, and gradually all fades into a blur of oblivion.

1.15. Roused by sound of voices, and find Mummy and Daddy's Aunties standing over me. All in smart Christmas Day frocks, but the Aunties' faces don't seem to match their pretty clothes like Mummy's does. Aunt Clara's dial frosty and severe, and Aunt Maud as much like my spotted rabbit as anything I hope to see.

"She's got her father's beautiful eyes," says Aunt Clara.

"Yes, indeed," chimes in Aunt Maud.

"And his well-shaped nose," says Aunt Clara.

"It runs in the family. We are all famous for our noses," chimes in Aunt Maud. Catch Mummy's eye and grin.

"Oh," cries Aunt Clara, "and she's got his kind, sunny smile!"

"Aren't you delighted, dear Mollie, that Baby is so much like our darling boy?"

"Rather," says Mummy. "If she's only got his disposition as well, she won't go far wrong."

"Ah!" they both say together, and look a little doubtful, until Mummy suggests we should go indoors out of the cold wind—and about time, for the Aunties' famous noses are getting redder every moment.

1.30. Assist at rather solemn Christmas dinner, seated in high chair and provided with a perfectly clean bone for the benefit of my gums, though I much prefer banging it on my tray. Mummy laughs at each bang and admires my efforts to make things a bit festive, but the Aunties give a jump every time and exchange long-suffering glances. Aunt Clara complains of chronic dyspepsia, and Aunt Maud says she hasn't been hungry for years, but they both manage to put away a tidy amount and come back for second helpings.

2.0. Crawl about on floor during pudding-time, and give my heel-drumming, lip-spluttering turn on the rug, but fail for once to bring down the house.

"I trust she won't be a tomboy," says Aunt Clara.

"And talk slang," chimes in Aunt Maud.

"I hope you will bring her up in the old-fashioned way," says Aunt Clara.

"A nice, quiet, unassuming girl," chimes in Aunt Maud; "not one of those dreadful flappers."

"I expect she'll turn out all right," says Mummy, and goes out of the room to hurry up the coffee.

2.30. No sooner is door shut than Aunt Clara takes me on her knee, and both investigate the quality of my undies.

"Real Mechlin!" exclaims Aunt Clara, fingering my frills.

"What extravagance!" cries Aunt Maud.

"Mark my words, there'll be a smash presently," says Aunt Clara.

"Poor darling Dicky," murmurs Aunt Maud; "she'll ruin him."

"Ah—he'll find he's got a handful!" declared Aunt Clara.

Give a jump in her arms and get a handful of her bright, brown, frizzy, front hair. Whole arrangement slips sideways and comes half off. Shriek with laughter. Am snatched away by Aunt Maud, and put down on rug with undue haste, while Aunt Clara whisks to the glass and readjusts *toupée* before Mummy enters.

"Don't you think, dear Mollie," she says, looking seriously annoyed, "it is just a little extravagant in war-time to trim darling Baby's petticoats with real Mechlin?"

"Oh, I didn't buy it," says Mummy; "it was some I had by me."

"Wouldn't it have been better, dear," says Aunt Clara, "considering our poor Dicky's straitened means, to have sold the real lace and used imitation Valenciennes instead?"

"Perhaps it would," says Mummy, "but I never thought of it."

"Of course, dear child," continues Aunt Clara, "if your father were making you a substantial allowance it would be very different."

"The burden would not fall so heavy on our dear Dicky," chimes in Aunt Maud.

"Instead of that he has shown a most unnatural spirit by disowning you because you

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married into our family," says Aunt Clara. "I hate false pride, Mollie. I speak plainly, but I always say what I think."

"We may be poor, but we are proud," puts in Aunt Maud, "and our family dates back two hundred and fifty years. I don't think it was so much false pride, Clara, as jealousy."

"It was neither one nor the other," says Mummy, getting very red. "Father thought I was too young to get married; that's why he refused to give his consent. But please don't talk about it, because it makes me unhappy."

"Unhappy!" snaps Aunt Clara. "Darling Dicky's wife *unhappy!*"

"Why, you're the luckiest girl in the world," says Aunt Maud.

"I quite agree with you," says Mummy quietly. "Have some coffee—it's getting cold."

Contrive to give Aunt Maud's dress a tug as she reaches greedily for a cup. Over it goes, but a bad shot, for most of the coffee comes over me and the fender. Howl with disappointment. Aunt Clara picks me up, and whispers a few sour somethings into my ear, while Mummy dabs up mess and refills empty coffee cup. Yell my best and brightest — large tears rolling down cheeks.

"She's got her father's beautiful eyes," says Aunt Clara. "Yes, indeed," chimes in Aunt Maud.

"I think I'd better have her," says Mummy, looking anxious.

"No," says Aunt Clara, "she must learn self-control and obedience."

Open my mouth wide, hold breath, and grow blue in the face. Mummy hurries to my rescue, and seizes me; elderly relative holds on tight until there comes a sudden fierce expression in Mummy's eyes that makes her think better of it and let go. Stop howling immediately; kick and crow in Mummy's arms.

"I think it's her teeth," says Mummy with a sweet smile. "I'll give her a drop of dill water."

"And just a little bit of temper, too," says Aunt Clara.

"Won't you let nurse have her for a little while, dear Mollie," says Aunt Maud, "so that we can have a cosy chat by the fire?"

"I told nurse she could go out this afternoon for a little while," says Mummy. "Her soldier boy is back on leave. I said we shouldn't want tea before five."

"How kind and thoughtful of you," says Aunt Clara—exchanging a glance with her sister. Greedy old things, they are beginning to worry about their tea already.

4.15. Mummy takes me to nursery, apparently in search of dill water, but we have a rousing Christmas romp together instead. On return, find both Aunties looking with interest at biscuit canister on sideboard.

"Did you have more than one biscuit-box, Mollie dear?" says Aunt Maud.

"Yes," replies Mummy, smiling, and as anxious as ever to please, "but the other wasn't nearly as nice. In fact, it's such an ugly thing I keep it in a dark cupboard."

Aunt Clara gives a glance at Aunt Maud and gets up. "I think," she says, "we will be putting on our things—it seems inclined to snow."

"Oh!" exclaims Mummy. 'Won't you stay to tea?"

"No, thank you, it's time we went home."

"More than time," says Aunt Maud, and I quite agree with her. So does Mummy in her heart, but when she comes back from seeing the last of them at the front door she seems a little downhearted.

"Oh, sunshine," she says, "we did try our best, but they have got their knife in us, and something upset them at the end. Goodness knows what."

Gives me a baker's dozen of kisses to console herself. I've no time for kisses personally, being keen on getting the shiny biscuit-box from the sideboard. Mummy puts it on the floor for me to play with while she writes to Daddy and tells him all about it.

4.45. Bang biscuit-box with shoe—quite a

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4.45. Bang biscuit box with shoe—quite a good drum.

good drum. Mummy doesn't mind, but when I try to eat white card, I find inside, she thwarts me as usual, in process of mastication. Pulls card out of mouth, stares blankly at it, and reads in startled voice: "With Dorothy Wilkinson's love and good wishes."

"Oh, Baby," she cries, "I got out the wrong biscuit-box after all. Well, that's done it! They'll never speak to me again. My luck's dead out this Christmas." Stands staring at the biscuit-box and then at me—and eyes slowly fill with tears.

All at once sound of quick footsteps on the path, knock at front door. Mummy goes very white, catches me up, rushes to open it—and there stands nice-looking young officer with sprinkle of snow on his "British warm." Seizes us both in his arms on the doorstep—hugs me so tight I begin to cry—so does Mummy, and I'm not sure Daddy doesn't, too. All want a drop of dill water, I fancy.

5.15. Quite a cosy time by fire, after Daddy has thrown me up to ceiling twelve times without turning a hair, and eaten such a meal that makes me cry for an extra bottle to celebrate the occasion, and get it, too.

5.45. Mummy sits with Daddy in big chair, and tells him all about Aunties, and he shouts with laughter over biscuit-box.

"But it's such a pity," says Mummy, "because they're so fond of you, Dicky."

"Rot!" says Daddy. "They hate me like poison, and always have done. Got me no end of hidings when I was a kid. Don't let that worry you—or anything else. This is just absolutely perfect, isn't it, Mollie?"

"Yes," says Mummy, lighting his cigarette for him, "*almost*."

"Why, what's the matter?" says Daddy.

"Father," says Mummy. "I can't bear to think he's all alone while I've got everything I want."

"That's his fault," says Daddy—blowing the smoke in my face. Makes me cough a bit.

"I know," says Mummy. "But, poor old chap—darling, what about giving him another chance? It's Christmas night. Let's take Baby round. He may resist us, but he couldn't possibly resist *her*."

6.15. Great sport. Am packed in pram, and wheeled along dark snowy street by my own bit of khaki. He *can* go the pace; takes Mummy all her time to keep up. Never been out at night before. Feel delightfully dissipated. Street lamps very alluring, but can't quite reach them. Try to catch falling snowflakes, but pram hood gets in the way. Then lights and snowflakes get mixed up with Mummy's and Daddy's faces, and indulge in forty winks.

Grey-haired man stands up very stern and straight, and says . . . "Who brought this child here?" [*Page 151, col 1.*]

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7.0. Lifted gently out of pram. Screw fists in eyes and whimper. "Oh, Baby," whispers Mummy, "*do* wake up good! Everything depends on you." She looks so pale and excited, decide to oblige. Am carried stealthily up broad steps with dummy in mouth. Big room, books all round the walls. Newspaper and pipe on table. Am laid on woolly rug in front of huge fire by Mummy, who nips out of one door with Daddy, as footsteps are heard approaching the other. In comes tall, thin, grey-haired man. Takes up pipe and paper; just going to sit down in armchair when suddenly spots me on rug. Gives a big jump, and puts on his spectacles. Drum heels on hearthrug and splutter lips. Grey-haired man stoops down and looks closer. Grin up at him and try to catch hold of his glasses.

"*Little Mollie!*" he murmurs. Touches my cheek to see if I'm real. Chuckle and kick in response, and talk to him in my own lingo. Bless you, he understands it all right. Nods and grins back again and kisses me on the top of my head. Other door opens slowly. Grey-haired man stands up very stern and straight, and says—thinking it's the parlourmaid:

"Who brought this child here?"

Mummy and Daddy enter.

"We did," she says.

"Well, I'm——" says grey-haired man; then stops and adds in quite a different voice: "—very much obliged to you!"

"I guessed you would be," says Mummy quietly. "I thought it was high time you made the acquaintance of your granddaughter. What do you think of her?"

"I'm proud of her," says the grey-haired man.

"Oh—and aren't you proud of Dicky, too?" cries Mummy, with a little break in her voice.

The grey-haired man puts one arm round Mummy and holds out his hand to Daddy.

"I should be a German if I wasn't!" he says.

8.30. Go home in big motor-car with pram on top—a bit peevish and drowsy. Glad to get to crib for once.

"Best baby in the world!" says Mummy, looking down at me.

"An absolute topper!" says Daddy.

Quite agree with them, but too sleepy to say so. Glad I've done them a good turn. Quite a busy day, taking it all round. May be only a baby, but fancy I've done my bit on my first Christmas Day.

ROMANCE.

I once loved Rose, her ways were fascinating,
  Her eyes were bluer than the summer skies;
Her dimples were entirely captivating,
  Her hair was of the sort one can't despise.
    Deep into Rosie's eyes I used to gaze,
    And say the sort of thing they say in plays.

Dear Rose could shoot—at tennis none could beat her,
  Such grace as hers I've never seen before;
And though perhaps I've met with voices sweeter,
  The echoes rang for miles when Rose yelled "Fore!"
    One day I bade to Rose a long farewell—
    It broke her heart, but—I'd met Isabel.

The only game *she* ever plays is ping-pong,
  She knows not golf from football, punt from pole;
Yet life with Isabel will be a sing-song—
  A thing as pleasant as a moonlight stroll;
    For while on Rose I bent a rapturous look,
    My Isabel was learning how to cook!

Mabel Dean.

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A THRILLING STORY OF "DONOVAN OF DOWNING STREET."

Donovan, the hero of these splendid stories.

THE TWO MISTLETOE BERRIES.

By William Le Queux.

In his capacity as King's Foreign Service Messenger, Hugh Donovan undertook many perilous and difficult missions. The following story relates how he penetrated into Belgrade, and obtained information of enormous value to the Allies.

It was a November morning, dull, damp, and dispiriting. Fog had enshrouded London during the night, but by eleven o'clock it had lifted, and as Hugh Donovan stood at the window of his half-sitting-room, half-photographic studio, he looked thoughtfully down into the grey gloom of Packington Street.

The neighbourhood of Essex Road is never at any time very artistic or inviting, least of all during the wet, grey days of early winter, when the London sky is leaden and the pavements greasy.

The Honourable Hugh had risen unusually late. Even at eleven o'clock he stood in his shabby khaki-coloured dressing-gown, his hair unbrushed and chin unshaven. Usually he was a very early riser, spruce and alert every morning by seven o'clock, as cosmopolitan travellers generally are. But, truth to tell, the previous night had been a rather busy one.

At seven o'clock, together with his *fiancée*, Mabel Metcalfe, and her father, he had dined in the big restaurant at the Ritz, and had afterwards shared a box with them at the theatre. Later, they had had a snack of supper together at the Savoy, and then he had gone home to Draycott Place in the car.

Half-an-hour after midnight he had kissed his well-beloved good-night, and taken a taxi to his rooms in Half Moon Street, where he had exchanged his evening suit for a rusty one of dark brown and a shabby soft felt hat. Then, bidding his gaunt man, Bettinson, "good-night," he, carrying his cane jauntily, had strolled along Piccadilly, apparently drifting quite aimlessly into London's night-life.

At the Circus, entering a taxi, he ordered the man to drive to the corner of a certain avenue in Maida Vale, where he duly alighted just before two o'clock, and, having dismissed the conveyance, he strolled up the long, broad thoroughfare. At the corner of an adjacent road he paused, lit one of his Russian cigarettes, and stood on the kerb for some moments in indecision.

Presently he crossed the road, and, after examining the exterior of a high block of flats, paying particular attention to a window on the second-floor, he returned to a convenient doorway and stood watching.

He remained there, with his overcoat-collar turned up, for nearly half-an-hour, until his ears suddenly caught the sound of an approaching taxi. Instantly he dashed across to the railings in front of the flats, close to the entrance.

The oncoming taxi turned suddenly into

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the road, and pulled up at the flats. From it there alighted a man of forty or so, who handed out a hatless young woman who wore a light-coloured theatre-cloak. The man paid the driver, and was escorting his companion across the pavement when Hugh suddenly lurched into them with stammered apologies, in pretence of being intoxicated.

"Get out, you drunken brute!" exclaimed the man, seizing the girl's arm

"Sorry — ver-sorry!" Hugh muttered. "Ver-sorry indeed—sorry, madam!" Hugh repeated as he grabbed at her arm, causing her to give vent to a low scream.

Her companion, a dark-haired fellow, seized the Honourable Hugh and flung him roughly off, saying:

"Get out! Get away! You ought to be ashamed of yourself! You low-down hound!"

"Oh, I am! I am a hound!" Hugh declared. "Isn't it funny? But I thought you were my brother Charles. So like him! Just his face! I'm so sorry. Forgive me, won't you?"

"Do come away, dear," urged the girl to her companion, though her voice showed that she was not English.

Hugh, as he reeled against the railings, drew forth an electric torch, which he shone full into the faces of both.

"Oh! For Heaven's sake!" the man exclaimed. "Do go home!"

Then, taking the girl's arm, he opened the door with a latchkey, and closed it after him.

"H'm—really, not so bad! It worked, after all!" murmured Hugh aloud to himself as, halting, he took out one of his exquisite "Petroffs" and, lighting it, strolled away contentedly. "I was not mistaken! The face I saw in the Place Massena, in Nice, three years ago, is the same—those tiny furrows round the lips are unmistakable."

Through the fog he walked as far as the Edgware Road, where he found a taxi and drove to the Angel at Islington, whence he walked to Packington Street.

He did not, however, retire to bed, but for a full couple of hours busied himself with his chemical apparatus which he took from his locked cupboard, distilling some dark brown decoction in a big glass retort, and sitting carefully watching the liquid as it bubbled above the pale blue flame.

Presently he took from the cupboard a small leather-covered pocket-book secured by an elastic band. As he examined it beneath the strong light, he took off the band and pressed a spring, when it was seen that the book was only a dummy one. It was in reality a small square box of stout steel containing two thin glass tubes filled with some pale pink liquid, the remaining cavity being empty.

After half-an-hour, having put on his rubber gloves and his ugly gas-mask, he prepared some dark, leathery-looking substance — which was really seaweed — by pounding it in a mortar. Then he took from a tiny box two small dried berries—the white berries of last year's mistletoe—and these he crushed to dust, afterwards mixing them with the seaweed, and adding some of the product which he had distilled.

The instant he did so a cloud of pale green smoke fell slowly to the floor of the room, the window of which was tightly closed, while beneath the door he had placed a wet bath-towel, so as not to allow the slightest whiff of the deadly gas to escape into the house.

With greatest care he filled the innocent-looking pocket-book with the fatal compound he had made—a compound which, when the air again reached it, would ignite by spontaneous combustion and generate a terrific heat—one of the most terribly inflammable compounds known to modern science.

Having secured the book by the elastic band, he took a camel-hair brush and, dipping it into a certain acid, carefully brushed it over in order to discover any leakage. Then, satisfying himself that there was none and that the book could be carried without danger, he put it aside and proceeded to mix several liquids together. This mixture he poured over the remaining seaweed, rendering it harmless, while with a vapouriser he sprayed the room, dispersing the pale green haze which hung along the floor.

On the following morning at eleven he stood looking out idly into Packington Street, wondering what was the best course to pursue.

He drew a long breath, his eyes narrowed, and he stroked his chin.

"H'm, a very difficult problem!" he muttered to himself. "I believe entirely in what Stefan Stefanovitch told me yesterday. If we could only get at the truth, what a *coup* we could effect in the Balkans! At least one thing is in my favour: I know that my enemy Novkovitch is living in Maida Vale. And he is far better off here than in Belgrade. Fortunately, he didn't recognise me last night!"

At a quarter-to-two the Honourable Hugh Donovan, smartly dressed in a black morning-coat, crossed Piccadilly and entered the big lounge of the Ritz Hotel, where Mabel Metcalfe, with her father, the ex-Ambassador, and some friends awaited him. The girl's eyes glowed

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with pleasure as from where she sat she saw her lover hand in his overcoat and hat. Then, a moment later, he bent courteously over her hand.

The luncheon party consisted of six, one of whom was a tall, rather gaunt, deep-eyed man, with greyish hair, and a diplomatic manner, who spoke in French, and who grasped Hugh's hand warmly.

He was Colonel Stefan Stefanovitch, personal-adjutant to His Majesty King Peter of Serbia, the stalwart and patriotic monarch who had been expelled from his kingdom by the wily Austrians after their crafty plottings through the previous ten years.

To Hugh Donovan the whole country from Vienna down to Constantinople, by way of Budapest, Zimony, Belgrade, Pirot, and Sofia, was as familiar as the clubs in St. James' Street. Before the war he had been *persona-grata* at Belgrade.

All the Ministers, and even His Majesty himself, welcomed and entertained him, for he was a regular visitor bringing his bulky dispatches—with the latest good stories—from Downing Street, and returning with all sorts of packets "per favour of Foreign Office bag."

At the round table in that pleasant room which overlooks the Green Park, the party sat down, Hugh between his *fiancée* and the Serbian official.

To the latter, his conversation was mostly in whispered tones, and Mabel, understanding the situation, did not seek to break in upon their discussion.

The man whom Hugh had known so well in the Royal Palace in Belgrade—for he had often ushered him into that upstairs room with its three long windows overlooking the broad Danube, in which His Majesty sat and smoked with his intimate guests—was very busy explaining certain confidential matters, the continuation of a discussion that had taken place between them at Half Moon Street on the previous afternoon.

"As you no doubt realise," exclaimed the King's adjutant in French, "if we could only learn the truth, then the whole situation would be at once changed. As it is, our brave Serbian Army may, His Majesty fears, enter a trap prepared by Austria and Bulgaria. Ferdinand hates us, and the Emperor Francis-Joseph swore after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, that Serbia should, within three years, become Austrian soil. There is but one channel by which we can defeat the plot—by the knowledge which that lady can alone supply."

"And she is cut off from us altogether," Hugh remarked thoughtfully. "Yes," he went on, "I have, since we parted yesterday, fully considered the problem from every point of view. I foresee all the difficulties—and all the dangers."

"Of the latter there are many," exclaimed the other. "You are too well known in Belgrade. That is so unfortunate."

"Yes. One can be too well known for one's liking, sometimes," laughed Hugh.

After lunch, followed by coffee and cigars in the lounge, Hugh took Mabel aside, and in a low voice said:

"You are really too unkind to forbid me to go abroad again, dearest. I got your letter this morning, and I am much worried by it. I must really try and complete this piece of work for Serbia. Remember what she and her King have suffered; remember how kind His Majesty has been to me; remember all that Serbia has at stake in common with ourselves."

Then, after a moment's pause, he went on, looking straight into her big eyes:

"Give your consent this once, and then I will promise to go abroad no more until the war is over. Now, darling, do give me your permission."

"But—darling, if—if you didn't come back?" she asked. They were standing away towards the entrance from Arlington Street, where nobody could overhear.

"If I did not come back, then I should merely have given my life for my country, just as hundreds of thousands of others have done," he argued. "But there is no reason for such apprehension. When I return, I will remain here with you, and you will redeem your promise to become my wife."

She was silent for a few moments. A waiter passed, and she hesitated to speak.

"You—you really insist upon it, Hugh?" she asked in a voice broken by emotion.

"I do. I beg of you, darling, in the interests of our beloved country, to allow me to make this attempt for the salvation of our gallant ally, Serbia."

Then suddenly she realised the strength of his argument, and with a little catch in her voice gave her consent.

"You are quite right, Hugh," she said. "Dad always says you see further than even Lord Chiddingford himself. Go! My thoughts are ever of you, and they will be until you are back again at my side."

Hugh grasped her little hand, and bowed, for others were watching.

"Thanks, darling," he whispered. "Every word of yours is, I assure you, impressed indelibly upon my memory."

Three weeks later, Mr. John T. Thurman, chief secretary of the Immigration Department at Washington, presented his passport and papers as a neutral official at the passport

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bureau at the Sudbahn at Vienna, that huge railway-junction into which three times each week, in peace days, the Orient Express ran from Ostend to Constantinople.

The big station, with its many downward staircases, was crowded by soldiers on their way back from leave to the Russian and Roumanian fronts, all eager to win against the Allies, shouting, flag-waving, and singing. The American, with his grey soft felt hat slightly askew, addressing the passport officer, who was in the act of very carefully verifying his papers, said:

"My! You're pretty busy here! We in America don't half realise the enthusiasm of you Austrians."

"Ah, Herr Thurman, this enthusiasm is because we know that we shall win. It is only a question of time. Serbia is ours already."

And the grey-moustached officer placed the American's passport beneath his embossing stamp.

"Ah, yes! The war is, indeed, a terrible one," declared the neutral as he took his passport and saw that it was viséd, enabling him to enter Belgrade, the occupied capital of Serbia.

Then he walked out upon the platform with a smile upon his lips.

"H'm, so far so good," he muttered. And Hugh Donovan—for it was he—strolled leisurely along the platform to await the arrival of the Balkan Zug—the new and much-advertised express from Berlin to the Bosphorus.

Next day, at the Hungarian frontier town of Zimony, situated on the Danube opposite Belgrade, it was bitterly cold, for snow had fallen. More passport formalities were necessary, as entry into Serbia was practically prohibited to all civilians, and the presence of Mr. John T. Thurman, of Washington, though his passport bore his photograph, and he produced letters addressed to him in Washington, New York, and Boston, was not regarded with favour by the three uniformed officers who sat at a table, while two or three police-agents in plain clothes lounged about, scrutinising him closely.

The American's official position, however, decided the chief officer to grant him permission to cross the huge reconstructed bridge over the river Save and enter Belgrade.

Delighted at the success of his ruse and the perfect manner in which he was passing as a neutral, he was emerging from the passport office on to the platform when he brushed past a rather well-dressed middle-aged woman, with dark eyes and high cheek-bones, a woman whose face was, alas! only too familiar to him. She wore black furs, carried a big bear muff, and was apparently awaiting the departure of the Balkan Zug, by which Hugh also intended to travel.

The woman was none other than Madame Hirsch, one of the most notable members of the Austrian Secret Service, whose duty it had been, in the pre-war days, to live in France, and to winter on the Riviera.

Hugh held his breath. Had she recognised him? No sign of recognition came from her small dark eyes, and as he glanced over his shoulder he saw that she had not even looked back at him.

Instinctively he knew himself to be in a very serious situation. Before the war he had known her quite well. To-day, however, now that the two Empires were fighting each other, the circumstances were different. It was Madame's duty to betray her whilom friend, just as it would have been Hugh's duty had he passed her in Bond Street.

Had she recognised him? he wondered. His appearance was altered, it was true, for by artificial means his hair was rather grey, and he looked twenty years older than he had on that afternoon only a few weeks before when he had stood with Mabel in the Ritz.

Hugh Donovan was, however, not a man to take undue risk. Alert, active, and quick to decide, he saw that he had to wriggle out of a very ugly corner. Therefore, quite casually, he sauntered back to his single sleeping berth in the train, where he busied himself with his two kit-bags. From them he took several things, papers and other objects, which he stuffed into his overcoat pocket. Among them was a bulky, official-looking cartridge envelope. This he carried in his hand, and, passing along the corridor, stood at the doorway covertly watching the woman in furs, in order to see if she, too, entered his train.

Very soon there was considerable bustle on the platform. Officials shouted, the engine let off steam, and someone blew a trumpet announcing the train's departure.

At that moment he realised the truth, for Madame Hirsch looked eagerly first into the passport office and then into the buffet. She asked a passing question of the *sous-chef*, and, apparently being reassured, entered the next car to where he stood. She was, undoubtedly, searching for the Englishman she had recognised—a serious fact which did not escape Donovan.

The train was slowly moving away when suddenly the American dropped the tape-tied packet upon the platform, and with a loud shout descended the steps, and as the train moved out he dropped off on to the snow in order to recover his precious papers.

The station staff saw his action and shouted

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warnings, but were too late, for the train was already on its way towards the great iron bridge which spans the Save, and which, though the Serbians had destroyed it, had already been repaired. Madame Hirsch had, of course, not seen that the Englishman had left the express.

Picking up the formidable envelope, Hugh shook the snow from his sleeves, and, approaching one of the passport officers, said in his brusque, American way:

"Guess that was near—eh?"

Then, finding the man did not know English, he made a similar remark to him in German, asking when the next train would cross to Belgrade.

"In about two hours," was the reply, after which he boldly entered the telegraph office and asked that a message should be sent to Belgrade to take the luggage out of berth number sixteen and keep it in the *consigne*.

Soon afterwards Mr. John T. Thurman sauntered out of the station to while away the two hours before the departure of the next train across the frontier.

"Gad!" he exclaimed beneath his breath. "That was indeed a narrow shave! That woman Hirsch was infernally clever. I admire her. She never lifted an eyebrow, even though she came upon me so suddenly. She thinks I'm safe in the train. What an awful disappointment for her!"

Then, smiling to himself, he strolled down the hill which leads to the pleasant little riverside town which in peace-time has its gay summer gardens along the river front, with the view of the great snow-covered Hungarian plain across the wide expanse of water.

The Danube was flooded by the yellow sunset when at last he arrived at the promenade beside its bank. To the left, far off across the water, rose the rock upon which Belgrade was perched. Most of its spires had suffered from shells in the bombardment, yet the frowning old Turkish fortress excavated in the cliff was still intact, still impregnable.

The little town of Zimony, or Semlin, as it is marked upon some maps—for most Hungarian towns possess two names—was a merry little place in pre-war days, possessing a small, elegantly-uniformed garrison, but now filled by soldiers. For that reason Hugh avoided the town. He sat upon a bench beside the river, thinking deeply. To attempt to return to the station was out of the question. Madame Hirsch, on arrival in Belgrade, would no doubt telephone to the Commissary of Police there in Zimony, and in an hour the town would be combed out in search of him.

No. He must enter Serbia by the back door, if at all.

He drew out his cigarette-case, lonely Englishman that he was, lit up, and set his mind upon the best way out. He thought of home and of Mabel, at the same time well knowing that very soon, if not at that very moment, the keenest search would be instituted. The Austrian Secret Service is quite as shrewd and as thorough as that of Germany, and the employment of women spies quite as universal.

Madame Hirsch was one of the chiefs—a woman of marvellous linguistic abilities and of considerable talent as a careful investigator.

The wintry sunset faded over the snow-laden landscape, the waters looked leaden, and dusk fell quickly, until just as it was growing dark he suddenly rose.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed to himself. "Old Karl! I wonder if he would remember? Well—I suppose some people would call it a desperate throw. But to stay here is to be caught like a rat in a trap, and that doesn't appeal to me. I must get across the river somehow. I can get out of this place by no other means."

After standing a moment motionless he, with sudden resolution, strode away in the direction of the little steam-boat pier where he knew, too well, there were passport officers, frontier-guards, customs examiners, and all the official paraphernalia to prevent the traveller from crossing the Danube.

Having given that place a wide berth, and walked a considerable distance along the river bank—such a pleasant promenade on summer evenings at that point where the great river makes a sudden bend on its way to the Iron Gates—he found a humble cottage, at the door of which he ventured to knock.

Two hours later, in the pitch black of the wintry night—for early winter had fallen in the Balkans and snow was descending thickly—Hugh was seated in a small boat clad in an old brown homespun coat which he had been given by Karl, the old Serbian who had for years been head-waiter in the Grand Hotel in Belgrade. Hugh had exchanged his clothes for those of a Serbian peasant, and in woollen stockings, the brown homespun coat, a homespun shawl, and a round cap of hareskin, was completely transformed.

Old Karl and his son—both true patriotic Serbians—bent steadily at their oars, pulling heavily across the swift, dark flood towards where Belgrade was silhouetted black against the dull, stormy night sky.

No word was spoken. Both men breathed

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The train was slowly moving away when suddenly the American dropped the tape-tied packet upon the platform . . . and as the train moved out he dropped off on to the snow in order to recover his precious papers. [*Page 155, col. 2.*]

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heavily as they rowed. Both knew Hugh Donovan well, and had received many a handsome tip from him in the pre-war days, but that night, when they heard of his secret mission to Belgrade, they refused the bank-notes he passed to them.

Two hours of hard and strenuous rowing—for they had to hug the bank to avoid the patrol boats—brought them to the opposite shore on Serbian soil about a mile beyond Belgrade.

As Hugh stepped out upon the bank of the great, swift-flowing river, old Karl grasped his hand with the single whispered word "*S'bogom.*" To those who know the Near East that word will convey much. It is the expression used by father to son, by wife to husband, by brother to sister, meaning "May God be with you always!"

Hugh gripped the hands of both, and a moment later disappeared into the darkness.

About eleven o'clock next morning a stalwart young peasant in his frayed home-spuns, slightly lame and walking with a stick, strode along the principal thoroughfare of Belgrade, past many houses which had suffered badly in the bombardment of months before. On every hand were traces of those terrible days of fire and sword through which King Peter's capital had passed, and, alas! over the citadel the hated Austrian flag was flying.

Hugh passed the British Legation close to the market-place—the house to which he had so often delivered dispatches, but it was windowless, with great gaping shell-holes in its smoke-blackened walls. At some distance down the broad thoroughfare he turned into the side-entrance of a big white mansion, over which flew the Austrian flag, a house which had apparently been repaired after the bombardment. Then he rang at the servants' door.

A tall old Austrian man-servant in semi-military livery opened it. Of him he asked in German permission to see the Countess von Szāpār.

"The Countess receives nobody," replied the man, gazing contemptuously upon the Serbian peasant.

"Please tell the Countess that I am from the Countess Zamoyska at Semendria, and have an urgent message for her."

The man hesitated a moment and disappeared, presently returning and ushering the peasant, who still limped with his stick, through the big mansion of the Austrian military governor of Belgrade, leaving him in a small, well-furnished room.

A few moments later a handsome, middle-aged lady appeared upon the threshold, startled at recognising her visitor.

"You! Mr. Donovan!" she gasped in broken English, closing the door quickly behind her. "How did you possibly get to Belgrade?" she asked in a low whisper. "You are in terrible danger here—and if it were known that you had visited me—I——"

"It will not be known, Countess," he replied quickly in English. "Because you are wife of the military governor of Belgrade you are believed to be a loyal Austrian. The world does not know that you were born a Serbian, daughter of the great patriot, Nicholas Ostovitch, and that——"

"H'sh!" she whispered. "Tell me, why are you here? They are searching for you! My husband, late last night, signed an order for your arrest!"

"I have a message from Stefan Stefanovitch—a message to you from His Majesty, King Peter," was his reply, and then, in a few hurried sentences, he delivered it, afterwards putting to her a number of important questions regarding the strength of certain defences of the capital and other matters which the Serbian Army and the Allies were extremely anxious to ascertain.

"Fortunately, my husband is out at a court-martial in the citadel," she whispered. "Wait! I think I may be able to find among his papers the information you want."

She left him for some minutes, and when she returned she drew from within her *crêpe-de-Chine* blouse several official-looking papers and handed them to her visitor, who in a few moments had scribbled some extracts from those confidential documents bearing the double-eagle stamped upon them.

Afterwards she replaced the papers within her blouse, yet scarcely had she done so, when the door again opened and a tall man-servant announced:

"Madame Hirsch."

With a quick movement Hugh sidled up to the tiny escritoire set in the window and stood with his back towards it. Then, next second, Austria's most astute female spy faced the Countess and the British secret-agent!

Hugh had been unable to escape, for the entrance of the woman was so sudden; and certainly Madame's surprise was as great as his own when, in the humble-looking Serbian peasant, she recognised the man who had so mysteriously disappeared from the Balkan express at Zimony.

Next instant Madame Hirsch became entirely cool and triumphant.

"This meeting, Countess, is indeed a most fortunate one," she said in a cold, hard tone. "Are you aware that this man is named Donovan, a secret agent of Great

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Britain whom we know travelled from Vienna to Zimony ?"

The Countess burst out laughing.

"Why," she said, "his is Milan Protitch, from my husband's farm at Topschieder. He has just brought me a message."

"No. You are quite mistaken," said the woman Hirsch, as with a swift movement she turned the key in the lock and secured it.

The eyes of the Countess and peasant met. Both realised instantly the peril of betrayal.

Hugh's first impulse was to spring upon her and re-obtain the key. Next second, however, he hesitated, for he saw her pass to the escritoire where, drawing out a piece of notepaper, she took up a pen in order, as she remarked, to scribble a note to the Chief of Police summoning assistance.

Donovan drew the Countess towards the door, and having done so, he swiftly took out his pocket-book, released the spring, and tossed it across the room to where the woman Hirsch was seated.

Then with a sudden bound he flung his whole weight upon the door in a manner which he had practised in case of such an emergency. The first attempt proved futile, and Madame Hirsch at once raised an alarm.

Next second, however, the door burst open, but at that same instant there was a dull report, a blood-red flash, and in an instant the room became a veritable furnace, the woman collapsing in the centre of the high, roaring flames

Donovan had just time to drag the astonished Countess out into the corridor, and beyond into the courtyard. Then he shouted an alarm.

There was not a second to lose.

"What a narrow escape!" he gasped. "But do not fear. The truth will never be known. *Au revoir*—until after the war!" he whispered, and as the servants came running up he slipped away in the alarm and confusion, carrying with him information of a most important character—information which would enable the Allies to deal a sudden and startling blow upon the ruthless enemy who had occupied Serbia.

During that day he hid in a ruined house outside the city, but venturing forth at night he overheard a man telling another how, by a mysterious and unfortunate fire attributed to Serbian spies, the official residence of Count von Szápár had been burnt to the ground—a lady visitor losing her life in the conflagration.

At three o'clock next morning he joined old Karl and his son, who by arrangement brought their boat to the spot where he had landed, and by dawn Hugh, still in his peasant's garb, was trudging along the great broad road which wound up the fertile valley of the Save and the picturesque Bozut river to Vincovic. The two hundred odd miles occupied him over a week, walking and driving, but with his enemy, Madame Hirsch, rendered silent, both the Serbian-born Countess and he were safe.

Fortunately he possessed ample money, and he had retained his passport as Mr. John T. Thurman. Therefore, on reaching Vincovic, he was able to purchase a suit of respectable clothes and a grey plush hat, and again re-transform himself into the American immigration official, in which guise he succeeded, after a good many exciting adventures, in passing through Vienna, back by way of Wels and Brussels.

In the latter city when he applied at the Bureau of the German Governor for a passport to Holland, the three officers found everything in order, and the document had been stamped and sealed when, to Hugh's dismay, just as he was leaving the office, he walked into a shabby little old man who was coming along the corridor. It was Herr Stimmel, the German agent who had not so long before travelled with him from Ostend to Brussels, and who had afterwards denounced him to the Princess Féo!

In a second the German recognised him.

"Ach!" he exclaimed, suddenly barring his passage. "So we meet again, Herr Donovan! Most excellent!"

But scarce had the words left the little man's lips than a well-directed blow from Hugh's strong arm sent him spinning to the wall, and the pretended American took to his heels and ran down the stairs and out of the building.

Notwithstanding the hue and cry raised, Hugh succeeded, after being hard pressed, in evading his pursuers in a maze of narrow streets in the vicinity.

His passport had been viséd it was true, but he knew that orders would at once be telegraphed to all the frontiers to arrest him when he presented it. That, however, did not trouble him very much, for, being resourceful, he purchased another coat and hat, and having altered his facial expression considerably, he duly arrived next day at the frontier station at Neerpelt, which, after formalities, he passed safely, finding himself half-an-hour later upon Dutch soil and on his way to Rotterdam.

The passport he had presented to the guttural bespectacled German officials at Neerpelt was the second one which he carried in case of emergency, and though bearing his photograph, was made out in the name

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of a Swedish doctor of medicine named Dyrssen, a native of Malmö.

And as Dr. Dyrssen he crossed the North sea to Tilbury, where he arrived on the morning of Christmas Day.

That night—Christmas night—he unexpectedly walked into Sir Lionel Metcalfe's in Draycott Place, and, greatly to Mabel's delight, sat down with the merry dinner-party at that moment in progress.

When, at dessert, the toast of "absent friends" had been drunk by the party, consisting of several members of the diplomatic circle and their wives, Mabel, looking along the table, and addressing Sir Lionel, said:

"To-night is the night of good fellowship, and of promises, father. I want you to ask Hugh to raise his glass to dear gallant little Serbia, and at the same time to promise us not to go abroad again during the war."

"My dearest Mabel!" cried Hugh merrily, presenting in his perfectly-cut dinner-jacket an entirely different figure to the humble Serbian peasant from Semendria. "Did I not faithfully promise you that when we parted that afternoon at the Ritz?"

And, taking his glass, he rose and made a solemn promise to the assembled Christmas party that he would risk nothing further.

"No," said Lord Chiddingford, who was the principal guest. "You've surely done enough, Donovan! The Sovereign will honour you very shortly, I can tell you that with authority. What you have just revealed to me regarding the Austrians in Serbia is of highest importance, and in order to gain such inside knowledge you must really have led a charmed life. Miss Metcalfe must certainly be proud of you."

The Honourable Hugh flushed, for at heart he was the most modest of men, though so full of activity and resource.

He stammered something, but the company heard it only indistinctly.

Yet, as all readers of the newspapers well know, the attack by the Allies upon the Austrians in Serbia was, by reason of our secret knowledge, a most successful and crushing one.

Only that Christmas party near Sloane Square knew to whose daring the fine success of the Allies was due.

And it was that same Christmas party which assembled one afternoon early in the following February at St. James', Piccadilly, to witness the happy union of Mabel Metcalfe, daughter of his Majesty's Ambassador, late at Berlin, to the Honourable Hugh Donovan, of his Majesty's Foreign Office—that careless cosmopolitan known to his intimates up and down Europe as "Donovan of Downing Street."

(These thrilling stories of "Donovan of Downing Street" will shortly be published in book form at the price of one shilling net. If you want entertaining reading you can't do better than buy a copy. Full particulars will be announced in the January Editor's Page.)

A CHRISTMAS CONTRAST.

Last year she sighed on Christmas Day,
  Her anxious thoughts were full of him,
For he was fighting far away;
Last year she sighed on Christmas Day.
He might be wounded, who could say?
  Or killed—her pretty eyes grew dim;
Last year she sighed on Christmas Day,
  Her anxious thoughts were full of him.

This year she welcomes Christmas Day,
  For he is safely home again;
How many things they have to say!
This year she welcomes Christmas Day;
Her eyes are laughter-lit and gay,
  Unshadowed now by fears or pain,
This year she welcomes Christmas Day.
  For he is safely home again.

Leslie Mary Oyler.

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Trials of the Twenty-Fifth.

"The Unwelcome Guests"—Mr. Reg. F. Smith depicts the elderly and unattractive couple who descend uninvited on their nephew and niece for Christmas.

Christmas Catastrophes, Illustrated by Leading Humorous Artists.

By Lesbia Robinson.

The fact that Christmas comes but once a year is a cause for rejoicing on the part of some people to whom its festive side is quite overshadowed by the many opportunities it provides for lamentable incidents. It is usually those housewives cumbered with much serving who make use of seditious epithets respecting the season, and in their case it is perhaps not to be wondered at, since the things that make or mar Christmas are so largely in their hands.

Even in pre-war days, when prices were normal, the question of providing sumptuous fare was a matter for prayer and fasting. Now that food is only a little less costly than rubies, and housekeeping allowances often a shadow of their former selves, the housewife who can steer through Christmas without landing her husband in the Bankruptcy Court or herself in a padded cell, deserves honourable mention.

It is idle to deny that to a good many folks the chief charm of Christmas lies in what are often delicately referred to as "the pleasures of the table." These are the people who, if the turkey is tough, glare at the hapless housekeeper as though she were personally responsible for its physique, and treat her as a hardened criminal if the brandy sauce is suffering from lack of spirits. As for her, too close an acquaintance with the turkey has bereft it of all charm; she has seen it lying naked and unashamed on the kitchen table, has pried into its innermost recesses, has endured so much anxiety on its account, that it is as so much sawdust in her mouth.

The same holds good with regard to

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Mr. Starr Wood portrays the horror of the elderly clerk who received by mistake the Christmas box meant for the typist.

presents, for few men acknowledge any responsibility in the matter of Christmas gifts

"Oh, I leave it to you to get something for Aunt Eliza. What about an eiderdown? Here's half-a-crown!" says the average husband, and goes off to business fully convinced that he is acting most handsomely. Meanwhile his wife spends the afternoon trudging from shop to shop seeking something chaste for Aunt Eliza, and repressing the shop-lifting instincts of her two young hopefuls who clamour unceasingly for model aeroplanes and waxen dolls.

Perhaps the uninvited guest is the greatest trial of all at Christmas. It is one thing to kill the fatted calf and wage a pitched battle with the holly on behalf of your friends; it is quite another to do it when the fruits of your labour are to be shared only by people for whom you have a distinct aversion.

Something of this kind happened to a middle-aged married couple, whose two sons, Gerald and Tom, being at the Front, invited a couple of convalescent soldiers to spend the festive season. Mrs. Doomwell, having lively recollections of her own boys' facility for shifting mince-pies and other Christmas fare, baked cakes and pastry enough for a battalion and secured the champion heavy-weight turkey of the town.

The guests were to arrive on the day preceding Christmas Eve. If the Factory Act applied to larders, the larder would have been condemned at once for its overcrowded condition, for puddings, mince-pies, and cakes were drawn up in massed formation. There was a fire in the heroes' bedroom, evergreens all over the house, and five dozen cigarettes in the smoking cabinet.

The soldiers were expected at 12.30; at eleven o'clock precisely, Mrs. Doomwell's Cousin Martha, an overbearing lady of exceptional plainness, arrived with her nondescript husband, and offered themselves as substitutes for the absent Gerald and Tom in keeping up Christmas.

In vain Mr. Doomwell announced that the British Army was at present taxing all their resources, Cousin Martha apparently

"Made in Germany!"—Mr. Bert Thomas gives us the patriotic small boy whose pleasure in his new toy is spoilt by the taunts of a jealous passer-by.

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knew the sleeping accommodation of the house down to the last pillow, and nothing short of a H.E. shell would have shifted her. Mrs. Doomwell said little, but when her soldier-guests arrived she held lengthy converse with them, and emerged with a triumphant glitter in her mild blue eyes.

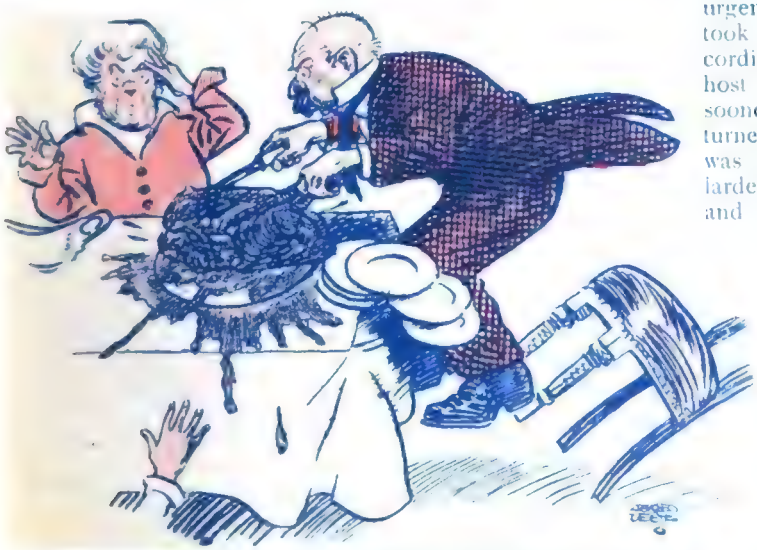
If Cousin Martha had a weakness, it was for food. When, therefore, just before dinner her hostess took her aside and begged she would excuse a simple meal, as the soldiers were on frugal diet, her heart sank. The watery soup and cold boiled mutton did not tend to raise her spirits. The soldiers, it appeared, were not allowed alcohol or tobacco; consequently Mr. Doomwell had announced his intention of dispensing with both, an example Cousin Martha's husband was in decency bound to follow.

"Over Military Age"—the sad fate of the pretty *débutante* condemned to grey-headed partners, illustrated by Mr. Cottington Taylor.

Supper consisted of gruel and biscuits, and the uninvited visitors went hungry to bed, quite unaware of the fact that down in the kitchen region their host and hostess and soldier guests were supplementing their meagre meal with beefsteak pie and bread-and-cheese, and chuckling heartily over their plan for "starving out" the unwelcome guests.

Breakfast, as Private Doughty afterwards expressed it, "put the lid on it," consisting as it did of toast and marmalade. Soon after, Cousin Martha set out for the village post-office, where she sent off a telegram. An hour or so later her husband was summoned home on urgent business, and they took a hasty and far from cordial farewell of their host and hostess. No sooner were their backs turned than invalid diet was declared "off," the larder yielded of its best, and at dinner that day Private Bubble created a record by consuming six mince-pies at a sitting.

There is always a pleasant excitement over packing parcels, but here again trouble may crop up in a most unexpected way. This was the case with the Brayne



"A Tussle with the Turkey"—Mr. Alfred Leete's idea of the havoc that can be wrought by an unskilful carver.

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"Shattered Hopes"—Mr. Thomas Henry immortalises the servant who is so overcome by her responsibility that she drops the Christmas pudding.

family, which consisted of two sisters, matched to a hair for plainness and domestic virtues, and brother Tom, who was assisting to annoy the Germans in France. Tom's parcel began life early in December, and increased in stature till a week before Christmas it had all the appearance of a grocery stall at a bazaar. By a process of ruthless elimination the Misses Brayne contrived to bring it within bounds, only to receive a visit from a maiden aunt, who bore an over-grown plum-pudding made especially for her favourite nephew.

It was then that the sisters fell from grace, made fair promises to their insistent relative—and put the pudding in the store cupboard with a regiment of white-capped brethren. All might have been well had not the servant taken it upon herself to "dress" the ranks of the puddings, with the result that the alien pudding was mingled with the others, and one of similar appearance took its place.

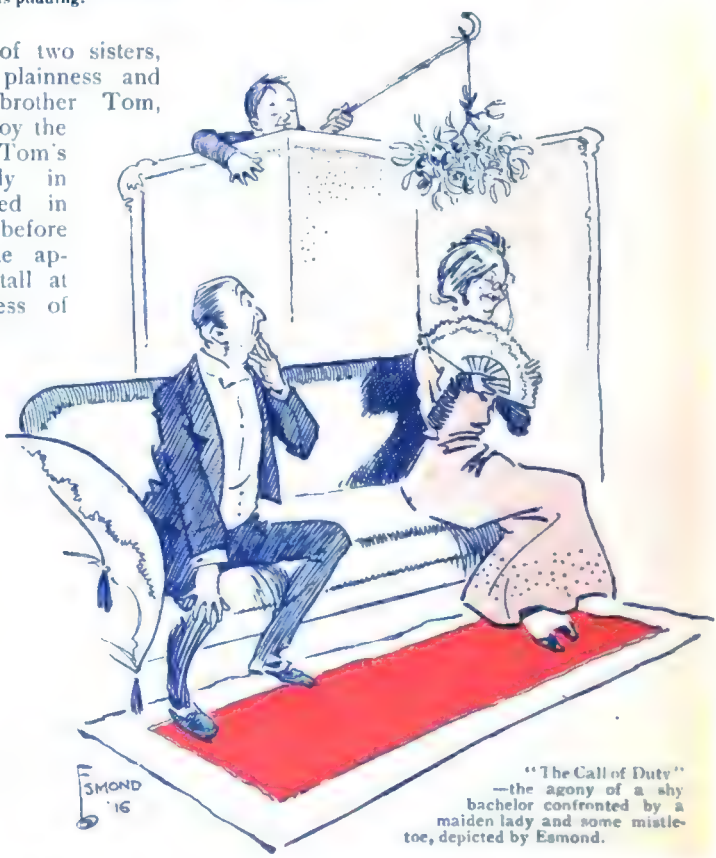
There is a family likeness between most puddings, and it was not until Christmas Day when Aunt Emily carefully placed a small white china pig on the side of her plate that the truth came out.

"What's that, Aunt Emily?" the eldest Miss Brayne inquired anxiously. "I didn't put a thimble or anything in my puddings this year."

"But I did! I put lucky pigs in Tom's pudding. Perhaps you can explain how this came to be here?"

Miss Brayne was not an inventive person, and her excuses would not have deceived an infant of two. Aunt Emily finished her pudding, but she left directly dinner was over, and has maintained an attitude of stern neutrality towards the family ever since.

It certainly seemed like a judgment on Miss Brayne, when at dinner next day, she broke one of her front teeth on another china pig. Thereafter, search revealed the existence of six more lucky pigs, so that on the whole it was a lucky escape for Tom and his comrades.



"The Call of Duty"—the agony of a shy bachelor confronted by a maiden lady and some mistletoe, depicted by Esmond.

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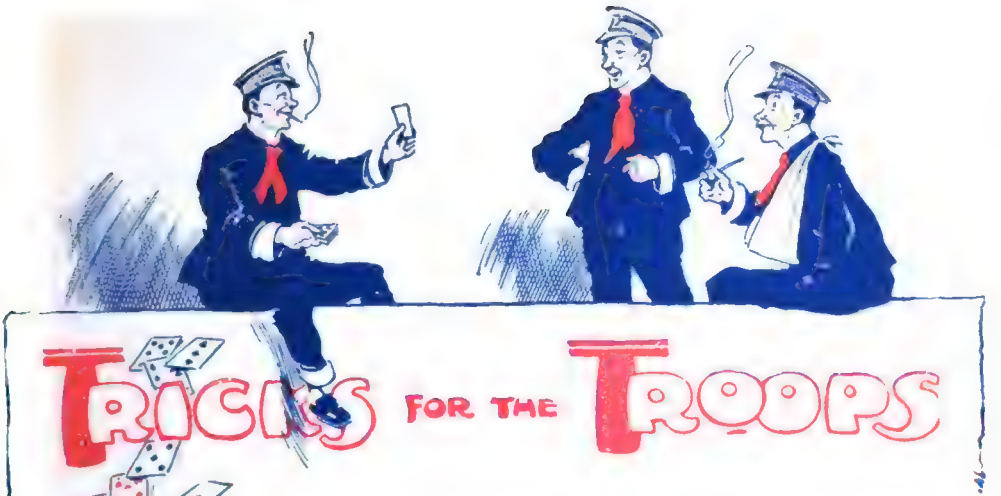


TRICKS FOR THE TROOPS

By Elizabeth George.

Whether in trench or hospital, there are sure to be dull moments when some simple tricks will prove a great stand-by. Here are some of the best on the market. They require only the simplest impedimenta, and they will enable you to liven things up and, if necessary, pay off old scores in the most approved fashion.

TRICKS WITH MATCHES.

A Broken-off Match.

This is a sure cure for the man who goes about with "Got a match, old chap?" always on his lips. Wait till he offends again, then produce a match, strike it, and hand it to him. To his surprise, he will find that, instead of a lighted match, he holds only the tail end, while you light your cigarette from the business end.

The explanation is simple. Take out the match and strike it; as you do so, break it in half with your finger and thumb as shown in the diagram. Practise it once or twice, and you'll find it quite easy. Holding the two halves together with your thumb and finger, hand the match to the victim. He will, of course, take the unlighted end, and you will be left with the lighted half, to enjoy his discomfiture.

This shows how to break the match in two between your finger and thumb.

The One Match Trick.

This game is unique in that the player who is "in the know" invariably wins.

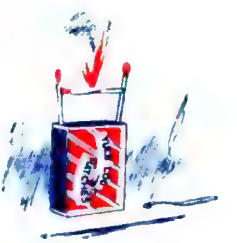
Lay twenty matches on the table, and tell your opponent that you will each in turn take one, two, or three matches, as you please, and the winner will be he who leaves one match for the other to take.

You must play first, and take three matches, leaving your opponent with seventeen; according to the number he takes, you then take one, two, or three, so as to leave him, in turn, with thirteen, nine, five, and one. In other words, you take three to begin with, and after that contrive that you take four matches between you until the game is over.

The Flying Match.

A match-box and four matches are required for this trick. Stand the box on end, and stick two matches upright in it, and another horizontally, between them, as in the sketch.

Apply a lighted match to the horizontal one, and get someone to bet which end he thinks will catch fire first. He is bound to lose, for the match flies away and goes out.



Apply a lighted match to one fixed between two upright ones, and the horizontal one will fly away and go out.

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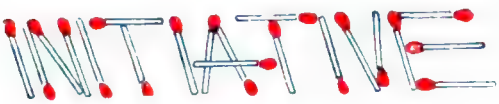
All on the Straight.

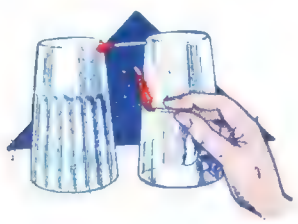
Take twenty matches, and challenge anyone to make a word of ten letters without bending or breaking them, adding that if he or she possesses the quality implied in the word, the problem will not baffle them.

The matches, arranged as below, spell the word initiative :



Suspending the Match.

A wax match and two tumblers are needed for this trick. Place the match between the inverted tumblers, and announce your intention of removing one of the tumblers without causing the match to fall. This may sound an impossible feat, but if you strike another match and apply the flame to the head of the one between the tumblers, it will, when fired, adhere to the glass. Then move the other glass, and the thing is done.



Apply a lighted match to a wax one balanced between two tumblers, and it will, when fired, adhere to the glass.

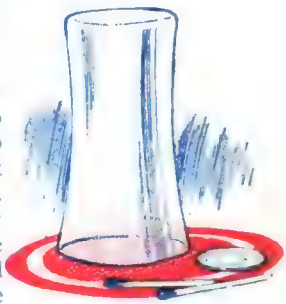
TRICKS WITH COINS.

The Deceptive Threepenny-Bit.

Take half-a-crown and four threepenny-bits, and ask someone to guess how many threepenny-bits can be placed on the half-crown without overlapping or projecting over the edge? Most people will say three. In reality there is only room for one.

A "Topping" Trick.

A tumbler, a coin, and a good-natured onlooker are required for this little trick. Put a tumbler upside down on the table, and lay a coin beside it. Now ask the onlooker to pick up the coin with two matches and put it on top of the glass.



Ask someone to land a coin on top of a tumbler with the aid of two matches. He may land it safely, but it won't be on the *top*.

After a few false starts, he will probably land the coin on the tumbler, and look to you for commendation. Then you will point out, gently but firmly, that you said the *top* of the tumbler, and he has landed it on the bottom!

Try Making Ten.

Lay three coins on the table in a row, saying: "Can you make ten with these?" Pick them up, saying as you do so: "One, two, three." Replace them on the table, adding: "Four, five, six." Then pick up *two*, one at a time, saying: "Seven, eight," and leaving the third where it is. Replace the two just picked up, saying: "Nine, ten!"

There doesn't seem much difficulty about it, does there? Ask a spectator to try, and watch his struggles. Hand him the three coins, when he will naturally put them down, counting: "One, two, three," pick them up, "four, five, six," and put them down again, "seven, eight, nine."

The whole secret lies in the fact that you must lay the coins down, and start counting as you pick them up. Be sure always to hand them to your victim—that is, if you don't want him to succeed.

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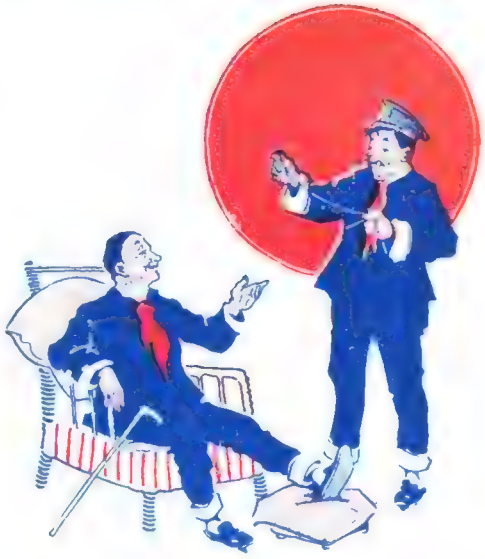
TRICKS WITH CARDS.

Naming the Card.

To do this trick, make a good show of shuffling the cards, at the same time noting the top card very carefully. Lay the pack face downwards on the table, and ask someone to cut the cards, and place his hand upon the top heap. Then announce that, by looking at the top card of your pile, you can tell the top one of those he is covering. This is quite easy, as you have already noted the top card of the pack, which is the one beneath his hand.

Take up the top card of your own pack, note it carefully, put it back, and announce the name of his top card. This done, replace your heap on his, and ask him to cut it again. As you have just seen the top card of the pack, which is now the top card of his pile, you can repeat the trick, and mystify him still further.



The Disappearing Ace.

From a pack of cards take out three of the aces, and holding them fanwise in your right hand, show them to be the ace of clubs, the ace of diamonds, and the ace of spades.

By holding the cards in this position the ace of hearts is transformed into the ace of diamonds.

Place the three aces on the table, and take up the pack in your left hand, and the first of the three aces in your right. Let the spectators see that this is the ace of spades, and place it near the top of the pack. Take the next card, the ace of diamonds, and put it somewhere about the middle of the pack. Then take the last ace, showing it to be the ace of clubs, and place it near the bottom of the pack.

Now place the pack on the table, and giving it a sharp tap, command the ace of diamonds to disappear. Ask a member of the audience to examine the pack, and see if the ace of diamonds is there. When he fails to find it, tell him to try your waistcoat pocket, and to the amazement of everyone he will produce it!

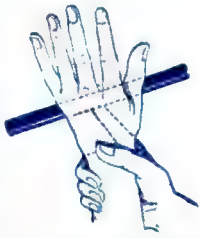
The explanation is very simple. The card which appears to be the ace of diamonds is really the ace of hearts, but held as shown in the sketch it is transformed into the ace of diamonds for the time being.

The real ace of diamonds is, of course, previously placed in your waistcoat pocket.

TRICKS WITH THE HANDS AND STRING.

The Magic Stick.

Take a short stick, or ruler, and place it across the palm of your left hand. Close the hand, and turn it over so that the back is uppermost, and grasp the wrist with the right hand. Then open the fingers of the left hand. The audience expect the stick to fall, but it does nothing of the sort, not even when you shake your hand—it is apparently lodged firm and fast.



In this trick the stick appears to be unsupported, whereas it is really kept in position by the first finger of the right hand, as indicated by the dotted lines.

The secret of it is that when you grasp your wrist the index finger of

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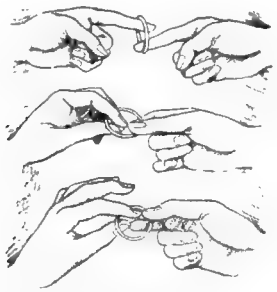
your right hand is extended behind your left hand, so that when your fingers are opened the stick is supported by that finger. The dotted lines in the diagram show the position of the index finger and the stick.

Drop the Ring.

A curtain or napkin ring or a loop of string will do equally well for this trick. Hold the ring on the two first fingers as shown in the top sketch, then twirl it round rapidly. Put the fingers and thumbs together,



The top sketch shows how to hold the ring at the start, the second the position of the fingers and thumbs after drawing the hands apart, and the bottom one their position when the ring is released.

and if you do it correctly the ring will fall; if not, it will be threaded on your fingers and thumbs.

The movements are quite easy, and consist in twirling the ring round, and drawing the hands apart so that the ring is supported between the fingers and thumbs, so that the first finger is uppermost on one hand, and the thumb on the other. Put the thumbs and fingers together, and the ring is released.

A Wonderful Knot.

Lay a piece of string down straight in front of you on the table. Inform your audience that you will take hold of each end of the string, and, without letting go of them, tie a knot in the centre. To do this, fold your arms, and, taking hold of each end of the string, pull your arms apart. This action will tie a knot in the string.

A Knotty Problem.

Produce a long piece of string and cajole someone into letting you tie it to his foot: then, having tied a knot in the middle of the string, fasten the other end round his neck. The problem is to undo the knot in the middle, and not one person in twenty will realise that the only way is to take off the boot before struggling with the knot.

❦ ❦ ❦

CATCHES AND JOKES.

A Feat with Figures.

Suggest to a companion who prides himself on his mathematical ability that he should take nine from six, ten from nine, and fifty from forty, so as to make the answer six, and he will scoff at you. When he has quieted down, explain the solution as follows:

First take nine from six: Six – IX = S. Now

$$\left.\begin{array}{l} SIX - IX = S \\ IX - X = I \\ XL - L = X \end{array}\right\} = SIX$$

ten from nine: IX – X = I. Next fifty from forty: XL – L = X. So you have S, I, and X left, and that's six, isn't it?

A Problem in Pork.

Two farmers, A and B, both owned pigs. A said to B: "Give me one of your pigs, and I shall have twice as many as you." B objected. "No," he said. "Give me one of yours, and I shall have as many as you; in fact, we shall both be equal."

How many pigs had they each at first?

Answer: B had 5 pigs, and A had 7.

Making a Maltese Cross.

Ask some painstaking person to make a Maltese cross with two matches, neither of which must be broken or bent. When he has assured you it can't be done, explain that it is a difficult feat as a native of Malta is necessary for its success. Having secured him, strike one of the matches, and drop it down his neck. This is almost sure to make the Maltese cross, but if it should fail, try a second match.

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A NEW SENSATION.

By Owen Oliver.

"'Tis virtue, and not birth, that makes us noble;
Great actions speak great minds, and such should govern."

Plain Speaking.

Lady Eva Auldbery swept into the waiting-room of the great physician without the apprehension usual to those who approach the arbiter of life and death. The family doctor had pronounced bluntly that there was nothing the matter with her, and that she only wished to consult a specialist as "a new sensation."

"That would be something!" she had retorted languidly; and since the doctor refused to be "a party to such nonsense," she had set her mind upon thwarting him. So she worried her father till he induced old Dr. Deedes to make an appointment for her with Dr. Graveson.

As soon as the appointment was made Lady Eva regarded it as a bore, and possibly a bore with irritating consequences. If the physician pronounced her to be in perfect health her father would probably laugh at her, and Dr. Deedes certainly would. So she refused to be accompanied by her mother. If she went alone she reckoned on persuading the specialist to qualify his verdict to the extent of prescribing a tonic—which she did not mean to take.

Apprehension came upon her suddenly in the waiting-room. Might it not be possible to have some horrible thing in your system (she had the vaguest notions of anatomy) and never suspect it until some meddling specialist found it out? There might have been people who had waited in this sombre chamber never dreaming of the shock to come. Suppose that she——? . . . It must be the dull room that put the silly notion in her head, she decided; or the dull man who also waited. His interest in the illustrated papers was so obviously a subterfuge—his alacrity in following the maid was a goaded alacrity. He seemed gone a long time. When he came back he mopped his forehead without subterfuge, knocked down a book from the table, and forgot to pick it up.

"Lady Eva Auldbery," the trim parlour-maid summoned.

Lady Eva rose, shivered, hesitated. The man glanced at her, and remembered that he was a gentleman, though a stricken one.

"Luck goes in turns," he encouraged her. "Mine was rather bad. So yours is sure to be good; and these things are never so terrible as we expect."

"Thank you," Lady Eva acknowledged. "I hope your bad luck is on the turn." She bowed graciously and walked steadily into the consulting-room, handsome, erect, and young.

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She found a well-bred smile for the physician and a well-bred comment upon the weather. She studied Dr. Graveson while he glanced at the *dossier* of her case—a double sheet of foolscap with a letter from Dr. Deedes inside, and only her name outside as yet. The letter was more candid than she would have liked, if she had seen it. "Only wants a new sensation." . . .

She considered that Dr. Graveson was absurdly young for his reputation; not more than thirty-five, and her sort of man in looks, except that he looked too clever for present purposes—far too clever for an unexpected malady to escape, and possibly not easy to lead in the direction of an unnecessary tonic. She was considering how best to introduce that question, when he turned the shade of his electric lamp so that the light fell right upon her face, and began to ask questions as to her age, occupations, and many other matters which struck her as immaterial. He jotted down the answers on the *dossier*.

Presently he sounded her, felt her pulse, put a little mirror on his forehead and peered down her throat, made her walk, wave her arms, bend, and do other things which offended her dignity. At last he asked her to be seated again, and resumed his own chair. He stared at her thoughtfully and in silence for some seconds. There was something in his look that Lady Eva did not like. She stiffened herself to meet any bad news as became a lady of her brave line, and restrained a start when he spoke.

"Why did you come to me?" he asked suddenly.

She felt the blood rush to her face at his tone and at the passing of her fear.

"You mean that there is nothing the matter with me?" she cried, with less than her usual languor.

"Physically," he said, "there is nothing the matter with you. When a healthy young lady of three-and-twenty is bored with life there is something very much the matter somewhere. Is there any special worry, Lady Eva?"

"No," she answered. She excused herself afterwards on the ground that she had got into the habit of answering his questions. "I just feel uninterested—'bored,' as you say. Perhaps a tonic——?" She smiled persuasively, but he did not soften.

"Umph! Is the trouble entirely in yourself? Not connected with any other person?"

His eyes were very keen.

"Really!" she protested. "If you mean to suggest a hopeless 'affair'? . . . Most certainly not! But I think we are getting rather beyond the bounds of—of our consultation."

"I do not think so," he denied. "You have come to me—I gather, at your own instance, not at that of your doctor—to be cured of a complaint which you describe as uninterestedness. It is my business to locate the complaint and cure you."

"Perhaps a tonic——" she ventured again, but he waved the tonic aside.

"I wish," he stated, "you could see all the cases that have come, or will come, to this room to-day."

"I don't see what that has to do with the question," Lady Eva observed.

"The patient who preceded you—I daresay you saw him in the waiting-room?"

"Yes," she said. "I hope it isn't anything very bad?"

"He has a serious—well, never mind the unpleasant name—a serious internal complaint. A dangerous operation is necessary. I hope he'll pull through, but one never knows what the surgeon will find in such a case. He has a wife and children dependent upon him."

Lady Eva shuddered.

"I am sorry," she cried—"very sorry! But I don't see how it affects my case."

"Don't you? My previous patient suffers from chronic hysteria, brought on by trouble, trouble for which she is in no way to blame, trouble which is hideous even to a doctor used to seeing the sad side of life. I don't take the mere word of an hysterical woman, of course. I have a reliable account from her regular medical attendant. I can do nothing for her, because I cannot prescribe the necessary operation. It would have to be an operation on someone else—with an axe!"

He set his mouth grimly.

"Really! As I presume you do not propose an axe for me I fail to see the connection with my case."

Dr. Graveson rose and stood with his back to the fire. Lady Eva liked his bigness and cleverness and resoluteness. She felt just a little in awe of him, and that sensation had the charm of novelty.

"The connection," he said, "is that there are plenty of people who need help pretty badly. If you are bored with a useless life, you can easily make it a useful one."

Lady Eva entirely forgot her uninterested languor, and rose with a quickness which would have surprised her friends.

"You exceed your function, Dr. Graveson," she said haughtily. "If you would supply me with a polite word for 'impertinent'——!'

"There is no impertinence," he told her calmly. "I do not deal in small civilities in this room. People come here to put their

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Lady Eva . . . rose with a quickness which would have surprised her friends. "You exceed your function, Dr. Graveson," she said haughtily. "If you would supply me with a polite word for 'impertinent'—!"

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lives in my hand. I try to deal with them faithfully and kindly."

"Your kindly consideration for my feelings is not obvious," Lady Eva informed him with some warmth.

"Oh! Feelings! I have to give the nasty medicine that people need, you see. . . . Very truly, my intention was kind; but if I had expressed the exact thought that was in my mind, I should have risked the polite word for impertinence."

"I find it easier to believe you impertinent than cowardly!" Lady Eva dared him. "I may as well drain your medicine cup!"

He bowed.

"So nearly as I can put my feeling into words, I thought 'that splendid young creature must not waste her life.' I am sorry I did not find a better flavouring for my medicine, and most sincerely glad that I have no bad news for you. Good-bye, Lady Eva."

He held out his hand, but she tossed back her head and ignored it.

"I will not try finding the polite word to tell you *my* exact thought," she stated. "Good morning!"

He held the door open while she swept out and shrugged his great shoulders when he had closed it.

"Well," he muttered, "she's had her new sensation, but I wish old Deedes hadn't put it on me. A magnificent girl!"

Then he sat down to the *dossier* of his next case—a poor young teacher-girl with "a lump in the throat." Her doctor asked him to see her at his house for a nominal fee. "She is an abnormally nervous little thing," he wrote, "alone in town with no one to keep her from worrying. It would get upon her nerves to wait with the crowd at the hospital." Dr. Graveson wrinkled his forehead and considered.

"If she insists on paying," he decided, "I'll tell her it will be included in her doctor's bill. I wish Lady Eva could see a case like this. It would wake the woman in her. . . . There's a woman to wake. I don't often misjudge people. . . ."

Then he rang his bell.

"Miss Moore," he demanded.

Waking the Woman in Her.

Lady Eva was so intent upon her own indignant feelings when she left the consulting-room of "the impertinent brute" that she did not notice the shabby, trembling girl in the waiting-room until she felt a soft touch on her arm.

"I am afraid you have had bad news," the girl said gently. "I am so sorry . . . I expect it will turn out better than you fear. My own doctor says it's only the thought of an—of these things—that is so bad, and they're nothing really."

"My news is not bad," Lady Eva said in the tone of one who declines further conversation, and then softened as she took in the frightened figure. "It is kind of you to think of me. Dr. Graveson has merely given me some unpleasant medicine! I hope the result will be no worse in your case."

The girl sighed.

"I know my doctor thinks there will have to be an operation, though he won't say so. He says, if there is, it will only be a small one, and there is no occasion to worry. I shouldn't be so frightened if mother were here, but she is such a long way off, and——"

"Miss Moore," the servant appeared with a summons.

"Good-bye," the girl said.

Lady Eva held out her hand.

"Good-bye," she said. "It's sure not to be so bad as you fear, or as he makes out. He is"—Lady Eva paused for a word that would not frighten the girl—"a trifle blunt. He'll tell you the worst of yourself, and you must discount it a little. Good luck!"

"Oh, thank you!" the girl cried. "You help me so much! If I had mother here I shouldn't be such a coward. Good-bye."

Lady Eva bent down suddenly and kissed the girl.

"Good-bye, dear!" she said. "Be as brave as you can be. It will help you."

Then the shabby little teacher went in to learn her fate, and Lady Eva swept out to her carriage.

"I'm sure he'll be brutal to her," she muttered. "I'd like to kill him. Home, Jarvis! Oh! I do hope there's nothing the matter with that child. She's like a frightened little white rabbit! . . . I wish I could know what he says. Why ever didn't I give her my address, and tell her to come to me if she wanted help? What he doesn't understand is that I'm only useless because nobody ever showed me that I could do anything, and men make out that I do everything right! Silly, soft baa-lambs! *He's* a man, if he's a rude one. . . . I shall go back and find out what he's said to that girl."

She pulled the check-cord.

"I'm going to walk, Jarvis," she told the coachman. "Tell them that the doctor says that I am all right, and only want a tonic."

She walked away in her usual languid style till the carriage was out of sight. Then she almost ran to the doctor's.

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"I will wait for Miss Moore," she informed the servant, and walked in. There was a woman waiting now with a pale little boy. She had one arm round him while he looked at the pictures in the paper. She seemed to choke when she tried to answer his excited questions about them. Lady Eva relieved her of some of the answers, and presently the boy left the pictures and stood at her knee and stared at her.

"You're pretty," he declared.

Lady Eva took him on her lap.

"Let's see if I behave prettily," she suggested. "I've some chocolates in my bag. Would you like them? There! . . . You are bringing him to see the doctor?"

"Yes," his mother said. "Yes, he is my only one. His father was weak in the chest. The doctor thinks if he went away to Switzerland it would cure him, but I cannot send him there. If any sacrifice would do it I would, of course, but . . . I have brought him here to see if there is any alternative within my power. . . ."

Lady Eva found a card in her bag.

"That is my mother," she explained. "If there is no alternative but Switzerland, will you let me know at this address? I am Lady Eva Auldbery. I think we might be able to help perhaps. . . . It is his turn now. I hear Miss—the previous patient—coming out. Good-luck, little man! You had better keep the box. You like chocolates, don't you?"

"Yes," he said, "and I like you.'

Lady Eva patted his head, then used her handkerchief quickly.

The pale teacher-girl did not seem to see anyone or anything. When the woman and the boy had followed the parlourmaid, Lady Eva put her arm round the girl.

"I just *had* to wait for you," she apologised. "You shall tell me about it presently. We will go somewhere and get some lunch. Don't try to talk yet. He has frightened you, the brute!"

"Oh!" the girl gasped. "He isn't a brute! He wouldn't even let me pay him, and he's going to arrange everything about the hospital for me. He says it is only a very little operation, but I must go in quickly, because I shall only worry myself ill if I wait long. I shouldn't if mother were here."

"We will send for your mother this afternoon," Lady Eva promised. "Come, dear." She took the girl's arm, led her to the door, stopped a passing taxi, helped her in, and told the man to drive to a restaurant.

"You don't understand," the girl told her. "Mother is old and poor. She hasn't anything except what my brother and I send her. He's abroad, and I can't afford her fare and keep up here."

"But I can!" Lady Eva declared.

"I think you are an angel!" the girl cried. "You look like one!"

"He wasn't unkind to you, then?" she asked.

"He was unimaginably kind," the girl declared fervently. "Just think of the trouble he is taking for me, and he must be so busy. He would be glad if he knew that you were helping me. He seemed quite worried about my loneliness."

Lady Eva tossed her head. It didn't help patients much to worry about them, she told herself, and if she ever met him she would emphasise the fact.

"I suppose you have forgotten a poor, frightened little girl named Moore whom you sent to a hospital to be operated upon?" she would ask. "She was rather an opportunity for you to have led the useful life, wasn't she? But I suppose a doctor never takes his own medicines!"

"You don't like him?" the girl suggested.

"Not very much," Lady Eva confessed. "Why should I?"

"I thought he liked you," the girl answered. "I told him that I was nervous before I came in, but a—a beautiful lady was very kind to me; and he seemed so pleased. He said, 'She is a very beautiful lady, and at heart a good one, I fancy.' . . . You are!"

"He had no business to talk about me!" Lady Eva cried, but she felt a queer new sensation of pleasure at a man's admiration. "Oh, well! We won't bother about *him!* We'll go and have lunch."

After lunch she wired a remittance to enable the girl's mother to come that afternoon, bought her a dressing-gown and a few other things to take to the hospital, went to her lodgings and arranged with the landlady about the mother's board, talked to her till tea-time, and finally left her with a promise to come the next day and all the following days till she went to the hospital. Then she returned home. On her way she bought a bottle of highly-coloured tonic! She grumbled about "the nasty stuff" when she showed it to her family.

"I don't believe Dr. Graveson understands me in the least," she complained.

"He'd be a clever man if he did, Evie!" her father remarked, with that faint smile of his. "Clever enough to marry you! Or not to!"

"Not to!" said Lady Eva emphatically. "He is a great savage bear! Never mind him. There was such a poor, terrified

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child of a girl there. I want to tell you about her."

"Umph!" her father pronounced, when she had finished. "It seems to me you've found the medicine you want, Evie. If you'd asked *me* for a prescription, I should have said 'Buck up and *do* something.' It must be a terrible temptation for poor old Satan when he sees such idle hands! Why don't you get married to fill up your time, you tiresome young person?"

"Because all the men I know are either fools or brutes," she said. "Except you!" She kissed him and sauntered off upstairs. If she had a weakness, it was for her father.

"I really shouldn't mind getting married," she confessed to herself in her room, "if I liked a man who was a proper man, like that horrid doctor, without being horrid. 'Useless' indeed! 'Splendid young creature!' As if I were a child or an animal! I know I'm useless, but why couldn't he say it civilly? I think it must be hateful to marry a man who is always right! *Thinks* he is! If he finds out what I've done for that poor little thing he won't give me any credit. He'll take it all to himself for 'ragging' me! The *rude* creature! How I dislike him!"

Lady Eva's admirers found her rather trying that evening. She found herself rather trying the next morning, till her tea came and she sat up in bed to drink it and look at her letters. There was one in a strange hand, a very neat, clear hand, which was new to her.

"I wonder!" she murmured, and turned it over and over before she opened it, as women do. "He wouldn't have the impudence to write and lecture me any more? What a really hateful man he is!"

At last she opened the letter with a dainty little paper-knife, and found it was from "him."

DEAR LADY EVA,

It would be an impertinence to write and thank you for your goodness to a terrified little sister, but I may thank you for the cheering that your goodness has given to a man whose business in life lies with the sick and sorrowful, and who is apt to feel vicariously depressed.

You will like to know that it really is a simple operation. The growth seems to be external to any vital part. One never knows quite where the surgeon's knife may have to go, but I expect her to get through very easily if she doesn't frighten herself into a low state beforehand. She is so dreadfully high-strung. You did just the right thing in sending for her mother, but I am afraid that a dozen mothers couldn't keep her from worrying inordinately; more than a brave lady like you can realise.

Maurice is operating at my request. He is the very best man, and only takes such an ordinary case personally to oblige me. It will be at three next Thursday afternoon. Shall I telephone to you afterwards?

I still wish that you could see more of my cases; but now I wish it in their interest and my own.

With apologies for my defects of expression. Even now I can't find the permissible word for "admiration"!

Yours very sincerely,
JOHN GRAVESON.

"I think I rather like that man," Lady Eva pronounced. "He must have gone there to cheer her up—I'm sure he meant to send for her mother himself—or he couldn't have found out what I'd done. Of course, I *was* a useless, lazy cat! I shall say 'Telephone, unless it saves your useful time to call. My time, as you know, is generally useless!' I wonder if he'll take that for sarcasm or for invitation? I think he'll take it just which way he wants to! I fancy it won't be the telephone."

But it was the telephone.

"The operation is over all right, but she's dangerously weak. Worried all her strength away! She needs someone she's fond of to hold to. Someone who's brave as well as kind. Her mother's no use. She'd only weep. Will you come?"

"Of course," Lady Eva answered. "Need you doubt it?"

"I doubted it so little," he replied, "that my motor is on the way to fetch you."

He met her at the hospital door.

"You must soothe her to sleep," he commanded. "It's a race between sleep and collapse, and collapse would possibly be fatal. She's the most absurdly nervous creature. She'd have died of fright beforehand if it hadn't been for you."

He took her home when she had petted the girl asleep. She was pale and trembled a little. He was very gentle with her, gentler than she had thought a big, strong man could be.

"Cry a little, if you like," he offered in the carriage. "I know how new and painful all this is to you. I am a little sorry to have been the one to introduce you to the sad side of life, and very glad! I think you understand, Lady Eva."

"Yes," she said. "I understand. Thank you."

She held out her hand, and he grasped it.

"The best helper I've ever had!" he told her, with a tightened grip on her fingers.

And then Lady Eva had her new sensation—that in the dim future the fullness of life was coming to her. It was a grand thing, she thought, to help the weak, but it would be a grander thing to help this strong man if he should ask her.

And he did!

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THE NIGHT OF TERROR.

By E. R. Punshon.

"I would not spend another such a night
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days;
So full of dismal terror was the time."

Johnny Sinclair was busy cleaning his rifle on the verandah. The last two or three nights the roaring of a lion had been heard not far away, and Johnny did not desire to lose any of his stock. From native reports the lion was an old one, and, therefore, likely to be dangerous, since an old lion, unable to hunt down game, will often be driven by hunger to take risks that a young beast would carefully avoid.

Last year Johnny had lost three good beasts before he managed to bag the depredator, a male so old it had hardly a tooth left in its head, and he did not desire to have that experience repeated. Farming was hard enough work without providing suppers for aged lions. So to-night he had told the boys to tie up a goat in a clearing not far from the house, and near by, in secure hiding, he meant to spend the night, in the hope that the lion would be attracted by the goat's bleating, and would give him a chance of a shot.

Within the house Eva Sinclair was busy cutting some sandwiches of reed buck venison to support him during his vigil. She was a little uneasy, though he had assured her there was not the least danger; and the fact that a living goat was to be used as bait, Johnny, with a husband's guile, had omitted to mention to her.

She came to the door now and stood for a moment watching him busy with his rifle. She was a tall, pretty girl, fair-haired, with blue eyes and a "home" complexion, for it was not long since she had come out to share the home Johnny had made in this remote and lonely district of Rhodesia.

"Johnny," she said after a little, "Johnny, don't you think it would be better to wait and see if the lion doesn't go away of his own accord?"

"My dear child," protested Johnny, "he's not going to do that while he scents a chance of getting any of our cattle. You wouldn't like poor old Beauty walked off with, would you?"

"Oh, that would be too horrible," exclaimed Eva with a shudder, for Beauty was her favourite cow. "But, oh, Johnny dear, you will be careful, won't you?"

"Of course I will, but there's not the slightest danger," he assured her, "not the least. Hunting lions here is just like killing rats in the old barn at home. Well, Kettle, what is it now?"

One of the boys had appeared and was hovering doubtfully near by, as if he wished to say something but were afraid of beginning. Johnny at once concluded that some animal had strayed or that something had been lost or broken.

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"Well, what is it?" he repeated sharply.

"Baas," the boy began, and stopped short and glanced at his mistress. "Baas," he said again, "there is a word for you none other should hear."

Johnny frowned and began to fear that the loss or breakage must be a bad one. And yet there seemed something a little unusual about the boy, and Johnny noticed that he glanced again at Mrs. Sinclair as though it were on account of her presence that he did not wish to speak out. Putting down his rifle, Johnny left the verandah and walked towards the negro, who drew away cautiously as he approached.

"Well, what is it?" Johnny repeated when they were a little way distant from the house. "What do you want to tell me?"

"Baas," said Kettle, lowering his voice to a whisper, "there is word that Pete Carson and Dutch Sam have escaped from the police."

Johnny did not answer for a moment. The news was serious if it was true. Pete Carson and Dutch Sam were two of the worst of the many ruffians of all nationalities who have made Johannesburg into a kind of headquarters of scoundrelism.

The intelligence of their escape was grave, because the heavy sentence which both men had recently received was the result of a conviction that had been mainly secured through the evidence of Johnny and his wife. A clever *alibi* had been prepared, and might have won acceptance but for the testimony of the Sinclairs that they had seen both men pass near their farm on the very night when they claimed to be nearly two hundred miles away.

From the dock Dutch Sam had sworn revenge in a fearful outburst of blasphemy that had to be stopped by actual force. Pete Carson had been less noisy, but Johnny remembered well the look of concentrated ferocity and rage that he had thrown after them as they left the Court, and afterwards threats had been uttered in a saloon by some of the confederates of the two men.

Johnny asked a few questions, but Kettle had no more information to give. It was merely a rumour that was passing from lip to lip in the mysterious way in which news does travel among the natives. But Johnny was well aware that such rumours are often very accurate, and knew better than to ignore this warning. He determined to give up his lion hunt and to remain on the watch at home all night. In the morning he would take Eva into the settlement and leave her there till danger seemed over.

"You shall have a double allowance of sugar this week, Kettle," he said to the boy. "I will tell the mistress. This night we must watch, so that we may not be taken unawares."

"Yes, baas," agreed the Kaffir, grinning with delight at the promise of the extra ration of sugar.

Johnny walked back towards the house, more troubled than he cared to show. Pete Carson and Dutch Sam were two formidable ruffians, and at present they would be utterly reckless and most likely in a very ugly mood. However, the pursuit would be hot upon their heels, and it was to be hoped they would have no time to think of paying off old scores. Luckily, too, this farm did not lie on any route they were at all likely to take. He supposed he would have to tell Eva; he wished very much he could keep it from her.

"Johnny!" Eva's voice called steadily as he put his foot on the verandah. "Johnny, is that you?"

"Yes, dear," he answered.

"Johnny," she said again, and this time something in the quality of her tones froze him with a sudden terror. "Johnny, there are two men here. They have fastened my hands, and they are holding pistols to my head. They say I must tell you to come in with your hands up and make no attempt at resistance, or they will shoot me."

For a long minute he stood very still, and with a gesture a little pitiable he put one hand to his forehead. His mind seemed to become perfectly blank, and he watched with interest a spider scuttling along the floor of the verandah.

"Johnny!" Eva's voice came again. "They want to know if you hear what I say."

His rifle lay quite close; a leap would put him in possession of it. But though with it he might avenge his wife it would not help to save her, since at the first hint at resistance Eva would undoubtedly be sacrificed. She called again, her voice a little tremulous.

"Johnny," she said, "I have to count six, and if you do not come in here before I finish they will shoot me—one—two—three——"

"I am coming!" he called loudly, and strode forward.

Flinging back the door he entered the room. Eva, very pale, her eyes wide with fear and horror, was standing in the middle of the room. On each side of her crouched a man. Johnny knew their scowling, evil faces at once; he remembered how, distorted with hate and fury, they had glared at him from the dock in the Pretoria Court of Justice; he remembered equally well the threats of vengeance that had seemed empty

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and futile then, but now took on a terrible significance.

Dutch Sam, the big, bearded man, had a revolver in his hand. Pete Carson, smaller, with a straggling beard and a long thin moustache, had a rifle. Each weapon was pointed at Eva, and each man had his finger on the trigger. Johnny saw that Eva's wrists were tied together behind her back by a strip of raw hide, and the mute appeal and the terror in her eyes drove him nearly mad. It was as though a mist fell before him; his head swam, he was not sure what was happening, and he heard his wife scream, short and shrill, as a deep husky voice said from somewhere near:

"Careful!"

The mist cleared. He saw Dutch Sam's finger quiver on the trigger of his pistol; he realised that Eva had seen that ominous quiver, too, and had screamed out in mortal fear; he understood that the least movement on his part and he would see her lying dead at his feet.

"Don't do that," he croaked.

"Put up your hands, then," ordered Sam.

He obeyed.

Carson, keeping his eye fixed warily on Johnny, rose with caution from his crouching position and put the cold muzzle of his rifle against Eva's forehead. She trembled but stood firm, while Johnny watched as in a maze of horror, and such fear as he had never known that mortal man could feel. Dutch Sam put down his pistol and cautiously approached him, a thong of raw hide ready in his hands.

"Put your hands behind you," he muttered hoarsely, "and don't try no monkey tricks unless you want to see her brains scattered over the floor."

Johnny trembled and obeyed. As meekly as a sheep in the hands of the butcher he stood still while his hands were made fast behind his back, and he was rendered helpless. His two captors looked at their prisoners and then at each other, and laughed.

"Good enough so far," said Pete. "Sam, you go and round up the niggers. Lock 'em up in the barn. Tell them if they keep quiet they won't be hurt, but if they make any bother we'll shoot the lot. I'll keep an eye on these two little dears."

Dutch Sam nodded and went, and Pete, with his rifle on his knee, sat and watched his two prisoners.

"You can do what you like with me, I suppose," said Johnny slowly, "though murdering me won't do you any good, and I'm willing to give you anything you like in reason. But I suppose I can take it you are men enough not to hurt a woman?"

"You take nothing," retorted Pete with another of his horrid glances of mingled ferocity and rage. "She helped to swear us away. We've as much against her as against you."

In that moment Johnny repented bitterly that he had not flung himself upon his two enemies at the first moment of their appearance. For though that would have meant Eva's death on the spot, he felt it would have been better far to see her lying dead on the floor at his feet rather than as she was now, a prisoner in the hands of these ruffians and he unable to help her. What good had it done that he had so tamely submitted to his enemies? With a half-smothered groan of uttermost anguish he began to tug and pull at the raw hide bonds that secured his wrists till the blood trickled down from the lacerated flesh, and Pete, looking on, laughed quietly to himself.

It was that low laughter that convinced Johnny of the hopelessness of his efforts. He ceased and glanced across at Eva, who was watching him with calm, gentle eyes that had in them even a touch of sorrow and compassion, and Pete Carson still looked at them silently, with his air of sullen and dark ferocity.

"It was your turn that day in Pretoria," he said. "Now it's ours."

Dutch Sam came back into the room with two bottles of brandy in his arms.

"I've locked up all the niggers," he said. "They won't trouble us. I got these in the store room; it's all there were," he added, putting the brandy down on the table.

"We had best get something to eat, too," remarked Pete. "If you'll permit us, ma'am," he added mockingly to Eva, who took not the least notice of him.

It seemed he resented her silence, for he muttered angrily to himself as he and Dutch Sam busied themselves obtaining some food, which they devoured hurriedly and with a kind of animal ferocity while Johnny, helpless and bound, looked on and wondered what fate was in store for his wife and for himself. The two ruffians had only been eating for a little when from a distance came a dull, rumbling sound, like that of thunder very far away.

"Lion," said Dutch Sam briefly.

"Yes," agreed Pete, drinking raw brandy from the bottle. "I saw a goat tied up for bait as we came along." Suddenly he began to laugh. "We'll do some lion hunting, shall we?" he asked.

"What do you mean?" demanded Dutch Sam.

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Pete was still laughing, a low, chuckling, horrid laugh. Evidently some fiendish idea, born of the brandy and the native devilry of his heart, had occurred to him and pleased him greatly.

"What do you mean?" grumbled Dutch Sam again.

"Come along and I'll show you," answered Pete, laughing to himself in the same soft and horrible manner. "I was just wondering how to even up with these two what was so keen to swear us away. Now, I've a real fine idea. Come on, Sam. March, you two!" he yelled at the prisoners.

Resistance was impossible, and they started, the two captives driven in front and Pete and his brother ruffian following close behind. What was going to happen Johnny no longer tried to think. His brain was, as it were, dull with sheer excess of emotion, and sometimes he looked at Eva and saw her, steady and clear-eyed, holding her head proudly, though she walked to an unknown doom. What was to be endured she at least would suffer with dignity and courage. Though they did not speak to each other, Eva now and then gave Johnny a quick glance of encouragement, as though bidding him, too, be brave.

Presently they came to the clearing in which a goat was tethered by a long and strong rope to a stake driven securely into the ground. At a little distance was a thick growth of trees, where it had been Johnny's intention to hide himself and wait till the lion, attracted by the bait of the goat in the open, should show himself and afford the chance of a shot.

"Here we are," said Pete, breaking again into his low, evil laughter. "Now we shall see; now the fun begins. Loose the goat, Sam."

Even yet neither Johnny nor Eva had the least idea what was coming. They were prepared for death, but in what guise they were to meet it they did not know. But they never doubted but that they had been led here to be slaughtered, and the only thing that seemed peculiar was their murderers' reason for taking them so far from the house and to this particular spot.

"What are you doing?" said Johnny suddenly, in tones that all at once had become high and shrill.

For Pete had pushed Eva forward, and he and Sam were beginning to fasten her to the loose end of the cord by which the goat had been tied up, and the further end of which was still secure to the stake in the middle of the clearing.

"What are you doing?" he screamed again, and as he spoke he heard far off the rumbling, sullen roar of a lion seeking his prey.

He ran forward clumsily, and tried to push Pete away. With an oath, the ruffian turned and knocked him down with so brutal a blow on his defenceless head that he fell to the ground and lay insensible for some moments.

When he came to, he was lying under the trees at the side of the clearing, in the midst of which Eva stood in the clear light of the newly-risen moon, tethered by the same rope and in the same position as had been the goat by which he had hoped to attract the lion.

Far off, but nearer than before, he heard again the roar of a lion as he went seeking his prey.

For a little the man lost all self-control. He begged, implored, raved, entreated, and they listened gloatingly. But Eva could hear him, too, and she called to him quietly:

"Johnny, Johnny!" And then: "Be brave, dear!"

He was silent at once and his chest heaved, his brain felt like bursting, as he strove to regain his self-control. Dutch Sam said to him tauntingly:

"You watch well, you'll be there yourself very like to-morrow night."

Johnny did not answer. With an effort he raised himself into a sitting position. Eva was standing very still, close to the stake to which she was secured. She made no attempt to struggle, and she uttered no sound. Very calm and still she stood, upright in the clear light of the moon. Once or twice she moved her head a little; once she shifted her position as though from weariness. Otherwise she made no movement; and when, nearer this time than previously, the deep roar of the lion came booming from out of the depths of the forest, she remained as impassive, as immobile, apparently as indifferent as before.

From her it seemed to Johnny that a little courage came to him. He sat still, watching intently, all his existence in his intent gaze, so that he was aware of and saw nothing else save Eva alone. Only when the dreadful voice of the lion was raised, nearer each time, a long, slow trembling took him from head to foot, and a low moan forced itself through his clenched teeth.

Close by Pete Carson and Dutch Sam crouched together, their weapons ready to their hands. The dreadful fascination of this scene of their own creation affected them also, and they spoke only in whispers and seldom moved. They, too, watched with an immense and silent attention, and so the hours passed.

All at once it was as though a thunderclap

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broke upon the stillness of the moonlit air. It was the lion who had come quite close, and was sheltering now in the very trees bordering the clearing where Eva stood waiting.

The brute roared again, as though expressing his surprise and distrust of this queer spectacle of a white woman standing out alone in the pale moonlight, impassive, unheeding his presence.

The echo of that last huge roar died away slowly in the depths of the forest. In spite of all he could do, Johnny was shaking and trembling from head to foot, and little moans burst at regular intervals from his panting chest. His eyes stung and burnt, so fiercely intent were they upon the quiet, steady, solitary figure in the centre of the moonlit clearing. Even Pete Carson and Dutch Sam seemed disturbed now, and Eva very slowly and quietly turned round so as to face in the direction whence the sound had seemed to come.

She wished at least to see her death when it leapt upon her.

The silence, the vast silence of the African night, rolled back and enveloped them as with a garment. Once the watchers — the staring, silent watchers—saw a bush move as the great beast slunk behind. Once they saw his eyes blaze like coals in the depths of a great shadow cast by a clump of tall bushes. Once they caught a glimpse of his lithe, long, yellow form as he prowled beneath a tree.

But still he forbore to leap. Perhaps he found it strange the woman should stand still and upright, not even moving, not fleeing for all the loud terror of his roaring. In a sense Eva's bonds were her safety, for had she been free she would have fled, and then at once the great beast would have sprung upon her. But they held her fast, and of her impassivity the lion knew not what to make.

He suspected mischief,

When he was a bare ten feet away he crouched, then leapt, like a yellow thunderbolt of fire and fur through the air, and came crashing on Pete Carson, bearing him screaming to the ground. [*Page* 180, *col.* 2.]

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danger, some hidden ruse. Possibly the lion remembered the dead bullock he had found once but had avoided, and which the hyænas had torn to bits and died therefrom, knotted in strange shapes and howling for water. For all he knew, there might be something like that about this tall, impassive, motionless figure all his roaring and prowling failed to put to flight. Something strange there was here at any rate, he decided, and after one more resounding, awful roar, he slunk back amidst the trees.

"Pete," whispered Dutch Sam, wiping his forehead which had grown damp with beads of sweat. "Pete, slip out and loose her. I can't stand this."

"I—I daresn't," muttered Pete with chattering teeth.

Johnny raised his head and looked at them.

"Well, you might shoot her—anyhow," he mumbled, speaking with great difficulty, for his mouth was dry and very sticky.

"You didn't ought to have swore us away, you and her," muttered Dutch Sam.

"I'm sorry we did," said Johnny.

Dutch Sam raised his rifle and lowered it again. His hands were shaking so that he could not keep the barrel steady.

"Pete," he said again, "slip out and loose her, I can't stand any more of this."

"I—I daresn't," Pete muttered back. "I wish we had some brandy." He cursed Johnny in a loud whisper. "Why didn't you have more brandy?" he demanded.

But it would have been better for them if they had held their peace, for that prowling lion, though fear of the unknown had daunted him for the time, was yet near to madness with the gnawings of starvation. Of that silent, impassive, motionless figure standing in the open in the clear moonlight he knew not what to think. But men crouching in the shadows and whispering together were familiar enough. They were dangerous certainly, and best avoided, but with a danger already experienced and escaped. Save for the hunger that drove him on the lion would certainly have put as great a distance as might be between him and them, but now he was prepared to take the most desperate risks—provided he knew what they were—in order to still the craving of his famished stomach.

While Pete and Dutch Sam and Johnny all watched with an awful and anguished intensity the solitary figure by the stake in the centre of the clearing, the lion had made a circle, and creeping softly, silently as any cat after a sparrow in a suburban garden, was coming quietly upon them from behind. His eyes glowed like living coals, but they did not see; he wormed his way so silently they heard nothing. When he was a bare ten feet away he crouched, then leapt, like a yellow thunderbolt of fire and fur through the air, and came crashing on Pete Carson, bearing him screaming to the ground.

Dutch Sam swung round, and in his panic struck the beast a senseless, futile blow the lion barely felt, but replied to with a sweeping stroke of his terrible paw that laid open half the man's side. Pete Carson screamed again, very terribly. The lion muzzled him for a moment, then took him in his jaws, and cantered quietly away with him to a sheltered spot some three hundred yards away.

Johnny struggled to his feet, wild-eyed and breathless. He hardly knew what had happened, or how it was his enemies had so suddenly vanished. With a lumbering, uncertain run he stumbled out from the shade of the trees to where Eva stood.

Johnny dropped on his knees beside her and began to bite through the raw hide thong that confined her hands. In a few minutes she was free. In her turn she freed him, and together, hand in hand, stumbling, afraid, trembling, shaken with deep joy and utter thankfulness, they hurried away from that place of awful trial back to their home and to safety, life and happiness once more.

"SEND US THE 'ROYAL'!"

"I need not tell you how fond of the ROYAL we are out here, and we certainly do revel in your theatrical features."

This is only one of the many appreciative comments of the fighting men who look to the ROYAL to cheer up their dull moments, and to you to see that they get it.

Your part is so simple. Just hand as many copies of the ROYAL as you can collect over the counter at any post-office. They must be clean and in good condition, but without wrapping of any kind. They cannot be sent to any particular soldier or sailor, but will be distributed among the troops to the very best advantage.

"Tommy's" leisure is often of the spasmodic order, and that's why short stories and brief, breezy articles are the very thing for him. He will fight twice as well if he is in good spirits, so—well, it's up to you, isn't it?

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CAP AND BELLS

A CRUEL KINDNESS.

OLD LADY (to parson's son): "How thoughtful the ladies are, Tommy, to give your papa so many pairs of slippers at Christmas."

TOMMY (bitterly): "They're not very thoughtful of my feelings!"

A CHRISTMAS CARD.

I sent a card to Violet;
Across its page was writ:
"Times change, but friends will ne'er
forget——"
And all the rest of it.

'Twas most artistic, quite unique,
And yet to my dismay,
When next we met she would not speak,
But looked the other way.

It was the card that made her cool,
Because it chanced to be
(I had forgotten, like a fool)
The one she'd sent to me!

Kathleen Kent.

OUR PATIENT NAVY.

Having recently got married, they were spending their honeymoon as a Christmas holiday, too. Although it was cold and windy, they had braved the exposure of the front so as to be alone for a time.

"How patient sailors are, Jack," Millie said presently, as she gazed at a revolving light out at sea.

"Are they, dear?" he asked fondly.

"They must be," she said. "The wind has blown that light out six times, and they still keep on lighting it again."

THE BUSINESS INSTINCT.

As she stood outside the little country inn, two great tears shone in her innocent eyes, tears so large that the passing cyclist saw them.

Beauty in distress caused him to dismount and ask if he could be of any assistance.

"I'm afraid not, thank you," replied the damsel, sorrowfully, as she pointed to an automatic chocolate machine attached to the wall of the inn. "I've just put a penny in that thing, and nothing has come out."

"That's soon remedied!" said the young man, confidently.

He slipped a coin into the slot, and then another and another. After the sixth he muttered angrily, raised his cap, and pedalled wildly away.

As he disappeared a female head peeped round the door.

"Any luck?" asked the owner thereof.

"Oh, yes, ma!" replied the damsel, gayly. "That's the tenth. I've netted five shillings since dinner-time."

On Christmas Day no shadows dim
The cloudless blue of Sadie's sky,
Since 'mid her pile of gifts she found
The white fox fur she'd longed to buy.

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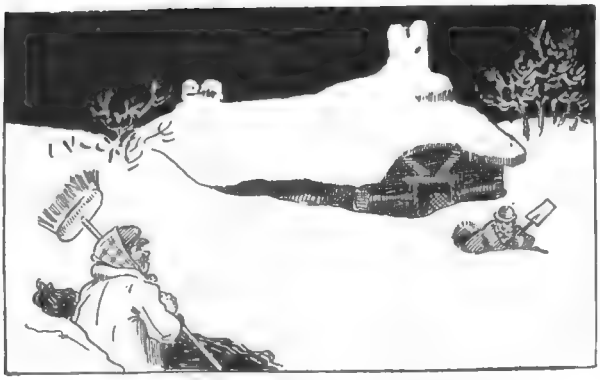

MAKING GAME OF HIM.

FAMILIAR RUSTIC (as the intrepid winter week-ender emerges through snowdrift): "Hullo, Bunny! Want yer burrow swept?"

TOO STRENUOUS.

"Dear Sir," (ran the lawyer's letter) "I am sorry to have to say that your aunt, Miss Maria McGinnis, has died recently. She left you two thousand pounds in cash."

For seven months Mike McGinnis lived a lordly life in top-hat and tight, patent-leather shoes. Then, his money all spent, he returned to his job at the brickyard.

To him came the lawyer.

"Mr. McGinnis, again I have good news for you. Your great-uncle, Terence O'Slane, has died, and left you another two thousand pounds."

Mike McGinnis leant wearily against a gate-post and mopped his head.

"Sure, an' I don't think I'll take it," he said slowly. "I'm not so strong as I wance was, an' I'm doubting if I could go through that again and live!"

AN UPSETTING INCIDENT.

"Sorry, old man, to hear that you spilt some soup on Miss Andrews' gown at the dinner last night."

"So was I; dreadfully put out about it. You know it isn't polite to ask for soup twice."

EXCELLENT GROUNDS.

MERCHANT: "Christmas-box, eh! I have no recollection of your ever having done anything to oblige me in any way. On what grounds, might I ask, are you expecting a Christmas-box from me?"

APPLICANT: "Well, it's like this, sir. I occasionally borrows one of your handcarts."

A CASE FOR PRUDENCE.

SCOTCHMAN: "Sae ye really think it's a guid case?"

LAWYER: "Undoubtedly, my dear sir. I am prepared to guarantee you will secure a verdict in your favour."

SCOTCHMAN: "Aweel, I'm muckle obleeged to ye, but I dinna think I'll gae to law this time, for, ye ken, the case I've laid before ye is my opponent's."

A TRAGEDY.

"I'll hang the pictures," father said;
"No need to hold the steps, though, Fred."
And climbing up with fearless tread:
"I'll hang the pictures," father said.

He eyed a nail with purpose dread,
But hit his finger-nail instead.
Crash! went the steps; he bashed his head;
"Oh, hang the pictures!" father said.

Elsie Skeet.

COCKNEY WAR-WORKER (during heated discussion): "There ain't no name bad enough for this 'ere Kaiser!"

AMATEUR WAR-WORKER: "The Kaiser! Why, he's a Nero!"

COCKNEY WAR-WORKER: "Say that agin, an' toff or no toff, I'll knock yer bloomin' 'ead off."

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THE TALE OF AN ELEPHANT'S TRUNK.

HOW IT BECAME A VERY KNOTTY PROBLEM.

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A SELL FOR YE LADYE MAUDE.

1. "I cannot think why I am not wed," quoth ye Ladye Maude, which was strange, as she was looking at her face in the glass. "I must see about the matter."

WASTED ELOQUENCE.

GUEST (at hotel): "Got any good roast beef?"

WAITER: "Yes, sir."

GUEST: "Bring me one of your best cuts. I want it tender, juicy, not too well done, not too raw, and with very little gravy. Have the fat and lean about equally divided, and be particular not to cut the slice thick. And don't forget the horse-radish. Can you remember all that?"

WAITER: "Yes, sir." Then he called out loudly: "Roast beef, one."

CHRISTMAS WISHES.

They had pulled a lot of crackers together, and had read and exchanged as many mottoes as they could get hold of even before the turkey stage had ended. Nor did love destroy his appetite, for he was engaged with a second helping of turkey, and—oh, joy, he had the wish-bone!

"Come, darling," he said, "wish with me." And he offered her one end of the dainty bone.

"I wish I were more worthy of you," she whispered shyly.

"No, no," he said, "it's the other way about. I am utterly unworthy of you, my queen. My wish is that you were locked in my arms, and that the key was lost!"

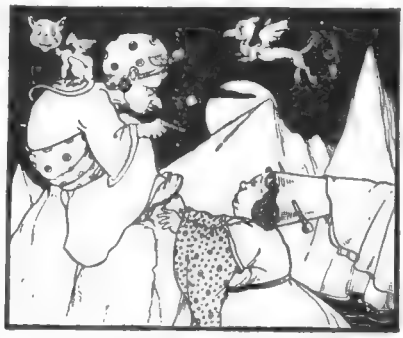
THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN.

Just as the tramcar started, two women rushed from opposite sides of the road to meet and greet each other right in the middle of the tram-lines.

There they settled down to a long chat, and, of course, the tram stopped. They talked and talked, while the car awaited their pleasure. Presently the passengers on top began to make sarcastic remarks.

Then the driver stepped into the breach. Bending over the front of his vehicle, he said, in the gentlest of tones:

"Pardon me, ladies, but may the conductor and I bring you a couple of chairs?"



2. So she did visit a wise old hag, who, for much goode cashe did tell her a righte 'cute plan to get wed.

THE WRONG IMPRESSION.

Father had decided that he must administer a stern lecture to his six-year-old son Harry. The boy had been naughty, but did not seem to appreciate the fact, and it was with some reluctance, therefore, that the parent undertook a scolding.

He spoke judiciously but severely; he recounted the lad's misdeeds, and explained the whys and wherefores of his solemn rebuke, his wife the while sitting by, duly impressed.

Finally, when the father ceased for breath and, incidentally, to hear the culprit's acknowledgment of error, the lad, his face beaming with admiration, turned to his mother and said:

"Mother, isn't father interesting?"

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

"Look here," burst out the indignant farmer, rushing into the village store, "I wish you'd be a bit more careful!"

"W-w-why, what's wrong?" gasped the elderly man behind the counter.

"Do you remember me coming in last Tuesday for some liniment to rub on my old cow?"

The shopkeeper nodded.

"And you went and gave me some eau-de-Cologne!" snorted the farmer, thumping the counter angrily. "I rubbed it on the cow, and ever since the beast has done nothing but gaze at herself in the duckpond and sigh!"

AN EYE-OPENER.

DOCTOR: "Well, and how did you find yourself this morning?"

PATIENT: "Oh, I just opened my eyes, and there I was."

A FITTING REPLY.

"Yes, grandma, I am to be married during the bright and gladsome spring."

"But, my dear," said grandma, earnestly, "you are very young. Do you feel that you are fitted for married life?"

"I am being fitted now, grandma," explained the prospective bride sweetly. "Seventeen frocks!"

3. So she did arrange thusly. (On the notice board was written that whosoever should rescue her from the Dragon should marry her and have all her cashe.)

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STANDING-ROOM ONLY.

For a few days before Christmas little Willie, who possessed a marvellous appetite, had, to the surprise of the whole household, been eating comparatively little. At dinner on Christmas Day, however, he recovered, and easily beat all his previous records. He had three substantial helpings of turkey, any one of which would have been sufficient for the meal of an average man. He followed this up by sending his plate along four times for plum-pudding.

When William had polished off the last of the plum-pudding, his father, after he had somewhat recovered from his amazement at the extent of his son's digestive capacity, asked him sarcastically whether he could not manage a mince-pie. After thinking the suggestion over for a moment or two, the young hopeful replied:

"I might manage it, dad, if I stood up."

"TWO'S COMPANY—"

A young couple were utilising the mistletoe bough in the library to the best advantage when the father of the blushing daughter blundered in.

Adopting an air of injured innocence, palpably contrasting with the unusual flush on the face of her male adorer, she inquired in her sweetest voice:

"What do you want, Papa?"

"I came to get 'A Study in Scarlet,' but I only wanted *one* copy," was her father's apt rejoinder.

A FAR-SEEING MAN.

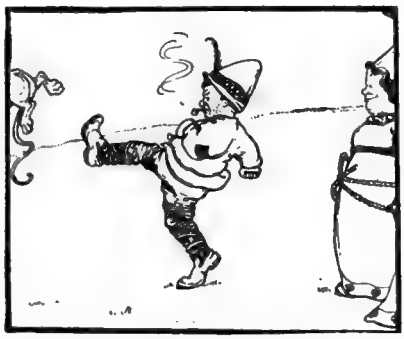
"What kind of a chap is he?"

"Oh, the kind that gives Christmas presents far enough ahead to allow time for return gifts!"

COOL.

MRS. NEWED: "Hallo, Exchange! I've just put some eggs on to boil, and I find that my clock has stopped. Would you mind ringing me up in three minutes?"

4. Many a brave man did come galloping by and did cast a happye eye upon ye bags of cashe, but when they see ye Ladye Maude's face they did ride hastilie on.



5. But a burly ruffian did come, followed by a female (for whom there is no room in this fayre picture), and did send ye Dragon packing. "You shall marry me and have all my golde," quoth ye Ladye Maude.

6. "Your golde I will most surely take," quoth ye burly ruffian as he did collar ye lot, "but I cannot wed you, thank Heaven! for this old girl is my lawful wedded wife!"

EASILY MANAGED.

"But it seems to me," objected the magazine editor, "that your poem lacks Christmas colour."

"Oh," replied the fair young poetess, "I can quickly remedy that. Where I refer to crimson skies, I can change them to leaden; and instead of saying distant hills, I can call them white."

EXPRESS DELIVERY.

Over the garden fence the conversation had suddenly turned acrimonious.

"An' if your boy 'Erbert ties any more cans to our poor dog's tail," was Mrs. Moggins' stern ultimatum, "'e'll 'ear about it, that's all! Oh, 'an' per'aps you've done wiv that saucepan wot you borrowed last Monday?"

"'Erbert," asked Mrs. Grubb shrilly, "wot 'ave you bin doin' to Mrs. Moggins' dog?"

"Nothin', ma," replied the small boy unblushingly.

"There!" said his mother triumphantly. "An' you returned 'er saucepan yesterday, didn't you, dearie?"

"Sent it back by 'er dog!" said 'Erbert calmly.

HE KNEW.

MRS. H.: "Yes, she's pretty, but a poor conversationalist; she seldom says a word. I can't understand why so many men propose to her."

"I can," sighed Henpeck.

THE ONLY REMEDY.

FATHER (left in charge): "No, you cannot have any more cake. Do you know what I shall have to do if you go on making that dreadful noise?"

LITTLE GIRL (sobbing): "Yes."

FATHER: "Well, what is it?"

LITTLE GIRL: "Give me some more cake!"

And she was quite right.

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A PRETTY WIT.

While we have human nature we shall have people who ask silly questions. One of these was worrying a woman tram-conductor recently until even her urbanity suffered from overwork.

"And what would you do," he asked with a leer, "if one of your passengers were forward enough to chuck you under your pretty chin?"

With lightning quickness came the reply:

"I'd chuck him under the pretty tram!"

HUSBAND: "I've just had forty winks, dear."
WIFE: "I've had more than that as I came through the Park."

FOR VALOUR.

"I forgot myself and spoke angrily to my wife," remarked Mr. Meekton.

"Did she resent it?"

"For a moment. But Henrietta is a fair-minded woman. After she thought it over, she shook hands with me and congratulated me on my bravery."

WHEN THE WAR WILL END.

FIRST TOMMY (sitting down exhausted): "Do yer know, mite, wot I finks will stop this war?"

SECOND DITTO: "Wot, Bill?"

FIRST DITTO: "There won't be no more earth to fill the bloomin' sandbags."

A DEMONSTRATION.

"Now, boys," said the teacher, "I want each of you to write me a composition on the subject: 'What I would do if I had £50,000.'"

One youth sat idle until the papers were called for, when he sent in a blank sheet.

"What does this mean?" demanded the teacher sternly. "Where is your composition?"

"That's it," said the boy. "That's what I'd do if I had £50,000."

A HOME FROM HOME.

"Are you married, my man?" a woman asked a sailor.

"Yes, indeed, mum—married and fourteen children."

"Poor fellow, travelling about like this! And don't you ever get homesick?"

"Only when I'm home, mum."

SECOND THOUGHTS.

"It's all right, Mary," he said patiently. "Go in for politics and stand for the London County Council if you want to. But remember one thing—the cartoonists will be after you as soon as you're a candidate."

"I don't care."

"And they'll put your picture in the paper with your hair out of curl and your hat on crooked."

"Do you think they would do that?"

"Of course. And they'll make your Paris gowns look like calico and say that your sealskin coat is imitation."

"William," she said, "I think I'll just stay here and make the home happy."

WIFE (reading extract from letter): "Martha writes to say she's on munitions, shell finishing."
OLD JARGE: "I shouldn't be none too particular wi' finish for them 'Uns."

WILFUL WASTE.

Mr. Cohen and his little son were walking down the main street the other day, when a large poster caught the eye of little Ikey.

"Fadder," he cried, "give me a penny to go and see the sea-serpent."

"Vasteful boy!" exclaimed his parent, "vanting to pay a penny to see a sea-serpent. Here's a magnifying glass; go and find a worm."

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For Fighting Men Only!

MISS MABEL FUNSTON GIVES PRIZES TO SOLDIERS AND SAILORS.

Photo *Hugh Cecil.*

Miss Mabel Funston, the pretty young actress, with whom this competition originated.

LAST month Miss Mabel Funston, the charming young actress who made such a hit in *Mr. Manhattan*, offered splendid prizes for the best love-letter written to her by any soldier or sailor.

There is still time to enter the Competition, so if you want to distinguish yourself, and win a prize into the bargain, now's your chance!

It happened like this. Miss Funston has received so many delightful letters from men serving in the Army and Navy, who have enjoyed her acting or perhaps seen her picture in the illustrated papers, that she felt she would like to do something for them in return. So she hit upon the idea of a competition for soldiers and sailors only, in which the prizes are chosen and presented entirely by her. After reading Miss Funston's cheery little message I'm sure you'll all want to write her a love-letter forthwith. This is what she says:

DEAR FIGHTING MEN,

You have been so wonderfully kind to me, and to my countrywomen that I am hoping this little scheme I have thought out may give you some pleasure—it's just a simple competition, and you'll find all the details on this page.

Briefly it happened this way—I have been getting so many delightful humorous and pathetic love-letters from fighting men I have never seen that it struck me I'd like to start a competition and offer the prizes myself. The Editor of the ROYAL MAGAZINE said he would help me, so if you feel inclined to try for one of my special prizes just read the conditions and fire away.

I wish you luck, all of you, not only over this competition, but always in the bigger competition of life.

MABEL FUNSTON.

A word about the prizes. Miss Funston is giving six wrist watches engraved with her name in facsimile of her own handwriting to the senders of the six love-letters which she considers the best. She will also give twelve leather letter-cases each containing a signed photograph of herself, to the twelve men whose letters come next in order of merit.

All men of our fighting forces are eligible, save only personal friends of Miss Funston. Letters should be not more than 500 words in length. Each letter should be accompanied by the coupon at the foot of this page and bear the sender's name and address in full. The Editor reserves the right to publish any of the letters should he so desire.

Competitors who do not wish their names to appear in connection with their letters must state the fact when sending in their entries.

Entries must be addressed to The Editor, THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and the envelopes marked "Cupid" in the top left-hand corner. They must reach this office not later than first post on Monday, January 29th, 1917.

"LOVE-LETTERS" COMPETITION

(To be enclosed with entry.)

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Photo *A. W. Cutler.*

A very ancient method of grinding corn. The corn is poured through a hole on to the lower of the two stones, and ground by turning the top stone rapidly round and round.

AN ANCIENT METHOD OF GRINDING CORN.

In some of the more remote villages in Ireland a very quaint and interesting method of grinding corn is occasionally to be met with.

On the ground are placed four stones covered with a white cloth, which act as a support for the "machine," which consists of two round, flat stones. These two stones each have a hole in the centre, through which an iron bar is passed and hammered into the ground. When the "machine" has been satisfactorily arranged, one person pours the corn, in the manner shown, into the hole, while another has the more strenuous task of turning the top stone rapidly round and round, thus grinding the corn between the two stones. The corn, when sufficiently small, drops into the cloth below.

This extremely primitive method is said to be upwards of 1,000 years old, and seems to point to the fact that our forefathers rejoiced in considerably more leisure time than most of us do nowadays.

PICTURE PARAGRAPHS

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting and Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

A BURIAL-PLACE IN THE RAFTERS.

Henry Triggs, who died at Stevenage in about the year 1724, made a particularly eccentric will.

He left all his property to his brother on the condition that his body should be committed to "the west end of my hovel, to be decently laid there upon a floor erected by my executor."

His executor duly complied with this strange request, and the coffin containing Henry Triggs' remains may still be seen by interested visitors, resting in the roof of a building which is now in use as a stable.

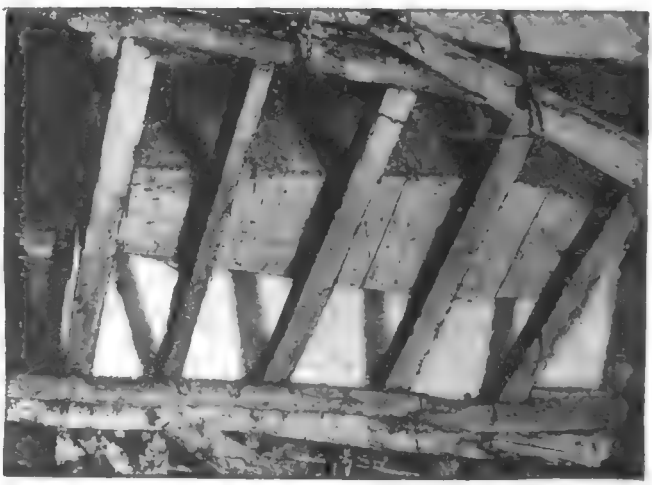

Photo *Sport & General.*

This coffin is to be seen resting on the roof of a building in Stevenage, and contains the remains of a man who died in about 1724, after expressing a wish that his coffin should be disposed of in this way.

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Photo *A. W. Cutler.*

The fish in Port Logan fishpond, situated in the south-west of Scotland, are so tame that they can be fed by hand, and are here seen enjoying a feast of limpets.

FEEDING FISH BY HAND.

Not in many parts of the world is it possible to find fish so tame that they will come and feed from one's hand, but this is quite an everyday occurrence at Port Logan fishpond. Few people would be persuaded to believe this if it were not for the conclusive evidence of the camera, which caught the fish enjoying a feast of limpets.

This remarkable natural pond is situated in the extreme south-west corner of Scotland. It is perfectly round, and is encircled by natural cliffs which rise sheer from the water's edge for some 20 or 30 feet. The depth of water is 10 feet at high tide and 8 feet at low tide.

Cod and pollock abound in the pond, and are prevented from seeking a new abode by means of a wire grating.

THE IRISH "STRAW BOYS."

The "Straw Boys" of Ireland were contemporary with the Fenians, and were so-called on account of the curious straw head-dresses they affected as a means of hiding their features.

In charge of a leader, who wore a badge similar to that displayed by the foremost of the two men in the picture—who, by the way, are merely masquerading, though they claim direct descent from the original "Straw Boys"—these men went about in gangs, usually by night, to the great discomfort of the people living in the district they favoured.

Feminine clothing was often worn by the "Straw Boys" in order further to hide their identity, and it is a question if one of their number was ever captured.

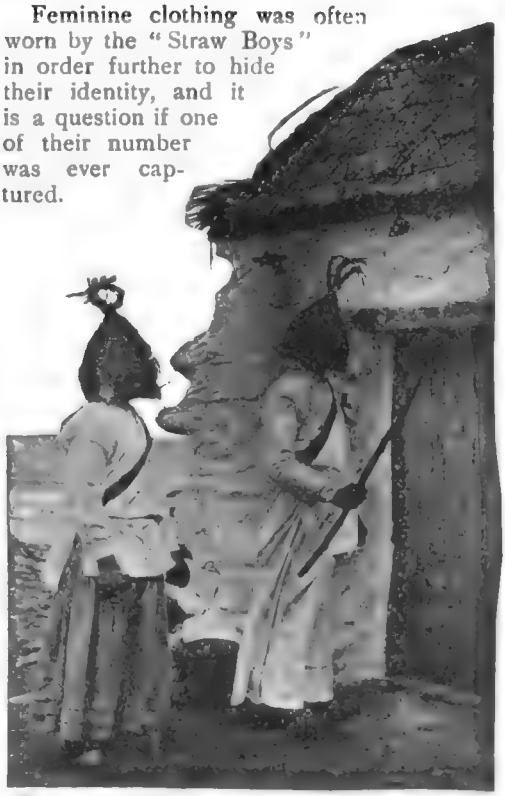

Photo *A. W. Cutler.*

Descendants of the notorious "Straw Boys" of Ireland, who went about in gangs, to the terror of those they visited. They attired themselves in this manner in order to conceal their identity.

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"Pals"—a snapshot taken in the Cinema Zoo. The monkey generously shares his nuts with the baby, who cracks them in a remarkably monkey-like manner.

A CINEMA ZOO.

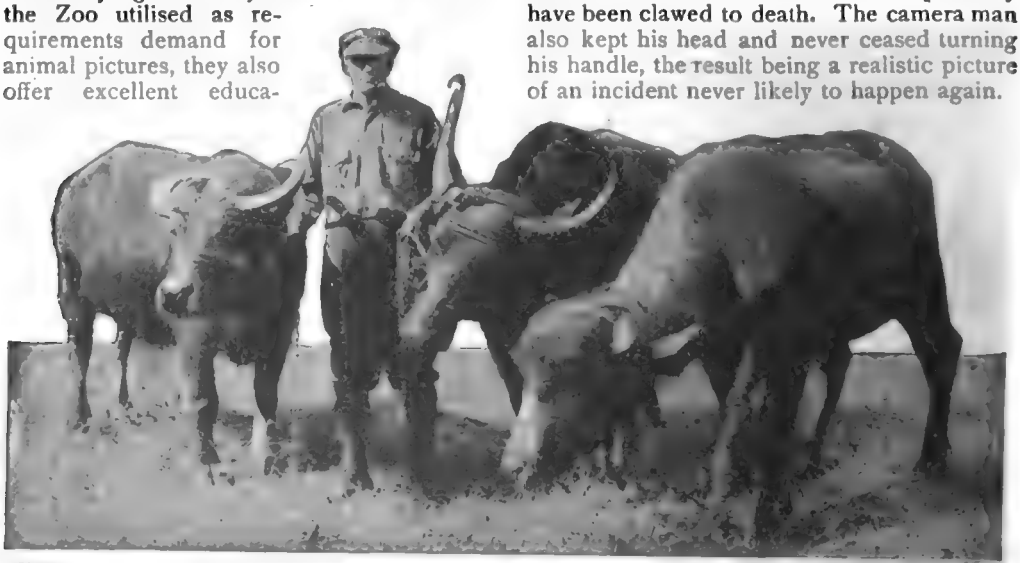
Where Thrills are Manufactured for the Cinema.

Out in Los Angeles, where the sun shines all the year round, is located the famous Selig Jungle Zoo—the world's most remarkable example of cinema enterprise. It is here that wild animal films are produced to provide those thrills which cinema-goers demand. The Zoo was created for two separate and distinct purposes. Not only are the jungle scenery and the denizens of the Zoo utilised as requirements demand for animal pictures, they also offer excellent educational opportunities, and the public at large are permitted to inspect the Zoo at their leisure.

The animal section is indeed a wonderful sight; nearly every well-known wild animal is represented, and at some time or other requisitioned for the making of cinematograph pictures. During their manœuvres before the camera they are given complete freedom of action, for it is essential that they should act naturally. Under such conditions the players are bound to take risks, but considering the number of pictures produced, the mishaps that occur are very few indeed.

Miss Kathlyn Williams, the leading actress, once had a very narrow escape while playing before the camera, when she was hurled to the ground and attacked by a leopard, which sprang upon her from a clump of bamboo. This incident, which was actually shown when the film was produced, was unrehearsed and unintended. It was originally meant that the leopard should only appear to attack the actress, its spring being really directed towards a goat tied out of range of the camera.

Miss Williams happened to raise her hand to brush away a stray tress of hair, and the movement, slight as it was, sufficed to attract the animal's attention to her. He pounced upon her, flung her to the ground, and fixed his claws into her scalp, hurting her severely. Fortunately, she had the presence of mind to lie still until rescued or she would probably have been clawed to death. The camera man also kept his head and never ceased turning his handle, the result being a realistic picture of an incident never likely to happen again.



Photos *By courtesy of the Selig Polyscope Co.*

These three buffaloes were among the "actors" in the film entitled "In the Days of the Thundering Herd," which was produced in the Jungle Zoo.

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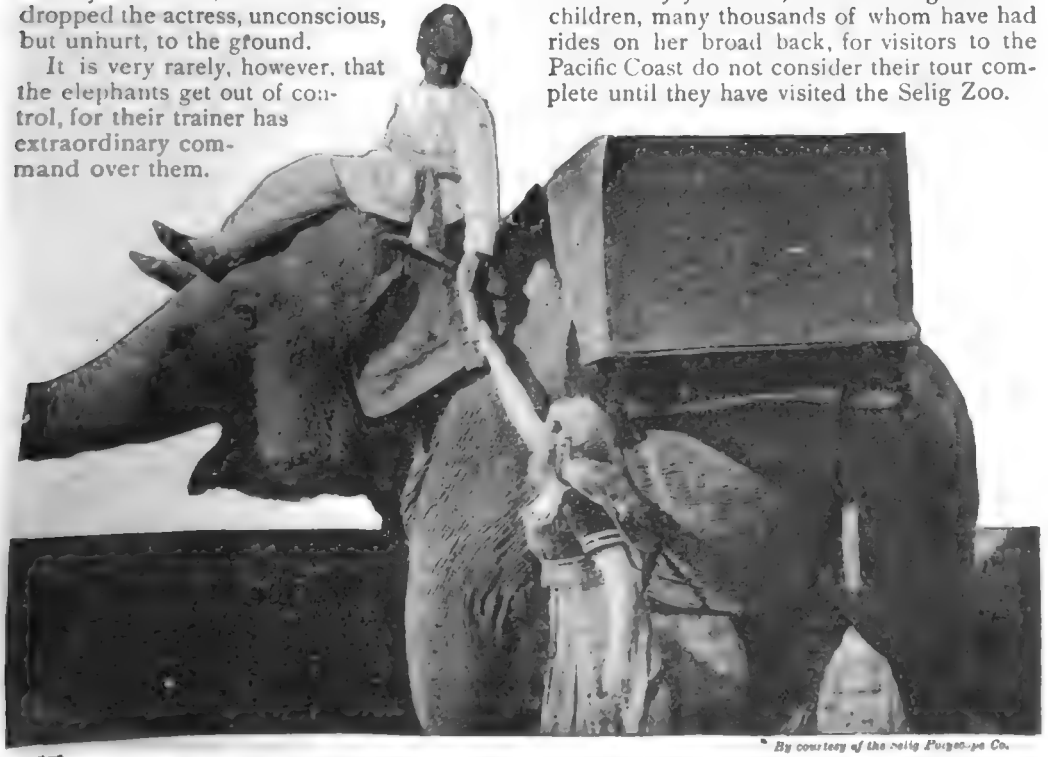
The elephants are, perhaps, the most interesting of all the animals, and are very industrious, for when not performing they are busy elsewhere. Recently the Selig Zoo studios were flooded owing to the bursting of a dam, so now one of the duties of the elephants is to pull trucks and motors out of the mud on to firmer ground, and they do this with an ease and dispatch that leads one to believe they enjoy the sport.

One of their number—who rejoices in the name of "Toddles"—is the perpetrator of a very black deed. "Toddles" is generally a docile beast, but one day, during a rehearsal, his good temper failed him, and he attacked Miss Williams, grasping her round the waist with his trunk and preparing to dash her to the ground. Fortunately, the elephant's keeper arrived on the scene just in time, and "Toddles" dropped the actress, unconscious, but unhurt, to the ground.

It is very rarely, however, that the elephants get out of control, for their trainer has extraordinary command over them.

Miss Kathlyn Williams in a scene from "In the Midst of African Wilds." Miss Williams has a great weakness for the wild animals with whom she acts——

"Tilly" is the celebrity of the herd. She first entered America in the early eighties, and is now sixty years old, and the delight of the children, many thousands of whom have had rides on her broad back, for visitors to the Pacific Coast do not consider their tour complete until they have visited the Selig Zoo.



By courtesy of the Selig Polyscope Co.

—and in spite of the fact that both an elephant and a leopard have tried to kill her, she has not lost her nerve for her work.

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By Francis V. Smith.

"Look at him, battering darkness to light.
Look at the fleet that he leads to the fight.
O, hearts that are mighty, in ships that are small,
Your old Cap'n Storm-along's king of us all."

"I don't hold with this here long-range sea-fightin'," said Captain Gunn of the steamer *Northern Light*, thumping an aged copy of a newspaper, which described the battle of the Dogger Bank. "'Tain't British, to my mind. We know what their sailormen are like—a lot of measly Dutchmen." (All German sailors are "Dutchmen" to the men of our mercantile marine.) "What's the use of shootin' at such swine from ten miles off? Lay aboard of 'em, I say, an' bash 'em at close quarters. The 'Nelson touch,' that's what they want."

"What d'you think 'ud happen to a ship that tried to get to close quarters?" said the second mate sarcastically. "'Ain't you never heard of torpedoes? You mayn't know it, Gunn, but Nelson's been dead quite a little while, an' his style of fightin' don't pay in these days. Suppose we was to run across a German submarine, now. I'd like to see you try your bloomin' 'Nelson touch' *then!*"

"If we sighted a submarine I'd fight the beggar," said the skipper. "An' if that rotten little sawed-off six-pounder that the Admiralty served out to us wasn't no good, blowed if I wouldn't run alongside an' board 'er. I'm not afraid of a crew of square-heads, not if every man jack of 'em had a torpedo under each arm, an' I'd back a British crew against any pack of 'Dutchmen' that ever came out o' Kiel Harbour!"

He pushed away his empty plate with a snort of defiance, and filled his pipe.

"Oh, well, perhaps you would," said the second mate, rising. "I don't deny that if you see trouble ahead you're bound to run smack into it like a bull at a gate. I ain't forgotten that last affair at Genoa, if you have. If me an' Scott hadn't spent a month's pay each in squarin' the police you'd be in jail there now. But there ain't any argument that appeals to a German torpedo, an' don't you forget it!"

"Don't you go throwin' that up in my face," bellowed Gunn, flushing, for his last

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escapade ashore was a sore point. "Can I help it if a lot of Dago police exceed their duty? I was just reasonin' with 'em, an' they tried to run me in like a common drunk!"

"Reasonin', were you?" chuckled Bell. "When me an' Bill Scott sighted you, you'd had about fifteen drinks, an' you was cuddlin' a *gendarme* an' tellin' him to call you early because you was Queen o' the May!"

"Clear out, you swab!" roared Gunn. "Get up on the bridge; it's past eight bells, an' I hope Bill knocks your head off when you get there!"

"*Come* on!" said the mate when he heard Bell's feet on the bridge-ladder. "If you want to jaw with the skipper don't steal half my watch below to do it in! What's he howlin' about?"

"Lecturin' on naval war," said Bell grinning. "But, by Gum! if he's in earnest it won't be any kind of a joke. He swears he'll fight if we get chased by a submarine."

"Phew!" whistled Scott. "Fight, will he? With one little worn-out gun an' thirty whole rounds of common shell?" (Thus was the *Northern Light* armed by a paternal Government against all the chances of war.) "And he'd do it, too—he's got the pluck of a bull-terrier, drunk or sober."

The mate went below to his dinner, and Bell grinned as sounds of argument arose from the cuddy. Evidently Scott was having an innings with the skipper. But his grin soon faded, for the *Northern Light* was nearing the Straits of Messina, and since German submarines had been active in that part of the Mediterranean for some weeks past, there was cause for anxiety. Bell sent for the boatswain, had the boats provisioned, and the davit-tackles looked to, and kept an unusually good look-out throughout his watch. But he sighted nothing more alarming than a French tramp and a couple of Sicilian fruiters, and the old ship thumped through the Straits unmolested, steaming against a five-knot current which made her ancient engines cough and grunt asthmatically.

"Seen any submarines?" said the skipper pointedly, when he came on deck next morning, and found the two mates on the bridge discussing the common enemy. Bell grunted crossly. He had spent most of the middle watch in staring through his night-glasses, but, however badly scared a man may be, he does not care to be reminded of the fact.

"McPhail told me he saw you taking a lifebelt into your berth when you turned in at four," said Gunn facetiously.

Bell lost the remnants of his temper, and consigned the skipper to a tropical port which is not mentioned in any sailing directions.

"Properly scared, ain't he?" chuckled Gunn, as the second mate stalked away. "An' I believe you're near as bad as he is, Scott. Now I shall be downright disappointed if we get to Salonica without havin' a shot at a German."

"Want to try your bloomin' naval tactics, I suppose?" said Scott. "You're a rattlin' fine hero, ain't you, Gunn? If you did sight a submarine you'd turn a lovely pale green an' hoist half-a-dozen white flags before she signalled 'heave to.' I'll believe in your bally 'Nelson touch' when I see you try it on, an' not before."

With a snort of disgust he stalked away—it was his watch—for a glance at the binnacle. But Gunn did not answer. He had picked up Scott's glasses, and was staring at a steamer about five miles away to the eastward. Until that moment there had been nothing special about her appearance; she was just an ordinary Swedish tramp flying the house-flag of a Stockholm firm. What particularly interested Gunn was that she had suddenly stood on her head in a cloud of tawny-yellow smoke, while her propeller whirled furiously in the air. Two crowded boats were pulling slowly away from her. And then, even before the smoke had cleared, she vanished.

Gunn, who had nerves of steel, restrained the natural outcry that rose to his lips, and glanced at his officers. Bell was expending matches and profanity in attempting to light his pipe in the fresh breeze, and Scott was trying to convince the helmsman—a green hand—that an error of two points in the ship's course was not quite so small as it appeared on the compass-card. Neither man had seen the disaster.

"I'll bet the two of you a month's pay each that I fight a German submarine before the day is out," he said guilefully.

"Done!" said the two mates. "An' easy money, too," added Bell.

"Not so easy as you think!" cried the skipper. "Oblige me by looking to windward."

They looked once, and then fought for the only glasses. They saw a swirl of oily water where the Swede had sunk, the two laden boats pitching in the choppy sea, and beyond, something long, low, grey, and sinister, with a hump amidships and a stumpy mast from which fluttered a signal, saying, in the international code: "Heave to, or take the consequences."

"Jehosaphat—a submarine!" said Bell blankly, and then relieved his feelings by a few terse and telling remarks.

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"I'm afraid to fight a submarine, am I?" roared Gunn. "Oh, I'll show you, you misbelievin' dogs!"

He bellowed down the speaking-tube to the engine-room for more steam, then ported helm and brought the submarine dead astern. At the same time the enemy turned to starboard and came on at full speed, with white water flashing about her bows. The *Northern Light* did her best; from her normal speed of nine knots she worked slowly up to ten-point-six, which was her limit. But it was evident at a glance that the submarine was coming up hand over fist. Scott, with a very long face, went aft to uncover the six-pounder that lived on the poop.

"Clap a loose tarpaulin over the gun, Scott," cried Gunn after him. "Don't let the beggar see we're armed."

He stumped the bridge, rubbing his hands as if he had just picked up a fat cargo at double war rates.

Meanwhile, the submarine was gaining at the rate of knots, and the crew of the *Northern Light*, who were leaning over the rail gloomily watching the progress of events, were distinctly unhappy, and said so.

"Not so much jaw, you miserable wharf-scrapings," said Gunn from the bridge. "You ain't goin' to get drowned this trip; not that drownin' ain't too good for some of you. You, Baird, let that boat alone an' get for'ard or I'll massacre you!"

But the crew were not perceptibly reassured, for they knew that the *Northern Light* carried some two hundred tons of explosive in number two hold, and the thought of a torpedo getting home on that cargo of sudden death was very bad for their nerves.

"What about them Swedes in the boats?" said Bell. "They're a long hundred miles from the nearest land."

"Oh, they'll be picked up all right," said Gunn. "They're right in the track of ships. The *Morgiana* of the Stevenson line ain't more than ten mile astern of us—oh, yes, there's her smoke. It goes against the grain to leave 'em, but they're safe enough. An' if we went back for 'em we'd be torpedoed as soon as we stopped to pick 'em up."

"Bang!" said the submarine, now a short two miles away, and Gunn was the one man aboard who didn't jump at the sound. A tall white column of spray flew up a quarter-mile astern.

"Rotten!" said Gunn critically.

Bang! again, and another shell-splash, uncomfortably near this time. Stebbins, the boy, whimpered audibly, and this inspired Gunn to deliver a few biting remarks.

"Shall we give him a shot, sir?" cried Scott, who was at the gun with the bo'sun (one Jackson, who had been in the Navy) and another man.

"Not on your life! Keep that gun covered, an' lie low."

Bang! Something droned overhead with a wicked hum, and the crew ducked in unison, as if worked by a single string.

"Sea's breakin' right over her," said Gunn, with his glasses trained on the enemy. "The squareheads at the gun are lashed to the stanchions, an' half-drowned at that. No wonder they're shootin' wild!"

Bang! and another nasty sound overhead.

"Why don't you fire?" asked Bell sulkily.

It is trying to most men to be under fire for the first time, and still more trying to be denied the satisfaction of hitting back. Also, he was very much afraid of letting the crew see that he was afraid.

"I'll fire when I get good an' ready to fire," said Gunn. "As long as the blighter thinks we ain't armed, he'll come on, an' the closer he gets, the more chance we'll have of hittin' him where he'll feel it. If you had the intellect of a frozen sheep, Bell, you'd see that without bein' told."

"You leave my intellect alone," began Bell hotly, but another shell cut him short.

A severed funnel-stay twanged sharply, and a crash for'ard announced the demise of a cargo-derrick in number one hatch. Splinters rapped sharply on deck and bulkhead, a deck-hand raised his hand with a cry to a reddening cut on his cheek, and another stood staring with stupid amazement at a badly-gashed forearm.

"Only a chance shot," said Gunn almost cheerfully. "How's your nerve, Bell? If you're feelin' bad you have my permission to lie down. But I think you'd be more usefully employed tyin' up that chap's arm."

Bell restrained himself with an effort, and went for'ard to render first-aid. But when he returned he unshackled his tongue, and what he said to the skipper would have done credit to the denizens of a dance-hall in the Barbary Coast of unblessed memory.

"Your language is gross and unchristian, Bell," said the skipper. "But you can't rile me when I'm on the point of winnin' a month's pay from you. In your beastly state of funk you won't have noticed that the sea's gettin' up real good. Them two squareheads at the gun is three-parts drowned if my glasses ain't lyin', an' they ain't put a shot anywhere near us in ten minutes."

Bell, who had no skill in repartee, went to the other end of the bridge, dumb with rage. Their conversation had been liberally punctuated by shots from the submarine, but the

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half-drowned Germans at the bow-gun were now shooting all round the compass, and no shot came near the ship. She was now little more than a mile away, half-buried in the seas which swept her from stem to stern, and her conning-tower stood up out of the smother like a half-tide rock. Over all, from a stumpy mast trailed her wireless aerial, and the German flag, now hoisted for the first time, fluttered above.

"Now we begin!" said Gunn grimly, and he signed to the gun-crew aft, who were dancing with impatience.

Jackson, the old Navy man, lovingly cuddled the shoulder-piece of the six-pounder and glared along the sights. Followed the keen smack of a cordite charge and a white splash astern of the submarine. Scott jerked the breech open and a shining brass cartridge-case hopped out and tinkled on the deck, and the third man thrust home another charge. The second shot was nearer the mark, and the crew raised a cheer.

"Got 'im!" yelled Jackson at the third shot. "Smack on 'is little conning-tower!" The crew cheered again, but that conning-tower was of three-inch Krupp steel, too solid for a six-pounder shell, and the submarine still came on.

"Port, you son of a dog!" snapped Gunn to the helmsman, who was watching the submarine instead of the binnacle. The *Northern Light* swung off her course. "Starboard!" and she swung back again, to repeat the manœuvre at Gunn's orders. The submarine was within torpedo range now, and he was not taking any unnecessary risks just yet. He kept her moving in irregular zigzags to confuse the Germans' aim, while the little six-pounder spat venomously in reply to the enemy's ineffective fire.

"By Gum, they've had enough!" roared Gunn.

Two limp, draggled figures were clambering up the conning-tower, leaving the bow-gun deserted, and Gunn executed a triumphant war-dance on the bridge. But his triumph was short-lived, for the submarine turned to port to bring her aft-gun into action, two fresh men went to the bow-gun, and both guns opened a brisk fire on the ship. The six-pounder shot its best in reply, but two to one is long odds, and the submarine, hanging on the ship's quarter in true pirate fashion, scored three hits in quick succession.

One shell abolished two of the ship's four boats, another knocked a ragged hole in the funnel, and a third fell on the fo'c'sle and burst against the capstan. The crew, who had behaved very well until now, began to edge aft towards the two remaining boats. Gunn recognised the beginnings of a panic and intervened.

"When it's time for you miserable dogs to take your annual bath I'll let you know!" he said fiercely. "Until then, if any of you even looks at a boat, I'll handle him so that his own mother wouldn't know him from a chimpanzee. Get for'ard, there!"

A cheer came from the gun-crew aft; they had shot away the submarine's mast, and the German ensign was trailing in the water. But the Germans cut away the wreckage and came on, firing faster than ever. A shell penetrated the deck above Gunn's berth and exploded below with a resounding crash.

"There go all my duds!" said Gunn savagely, as the smoke burst out of the cabin scuttles. "Oh, I'll pay 'em for this! You, Bell, get some men an' rig the hoses—that blighted berth's afire by the smell of it."

Bell vanished, glad to find something to do.

"Starboard, you swab!" said Gunn, bent on vengeance, and the *Northern Light* waddled round in her smallest turning-circle, and closed with her antagonist.

"What are you at, Gunn?" yelled Scott at this.

"Never you mind what I'm at!" bellowed Gunn. "Give 'em hell with the gun!"

"We've only got six rounds left," shouted the mate desperately.

"Use 'em, you lazy hounds!" screamed Gunn, shaking his fist at the submarine, which was now a short half-mile away.

"Bang!" went the little gun, and the shell glanced off the German's streaming deck-plates and plopped into the sea a mile away. Bang!—a miss. Bang!—and the submarine's aft gun vanished in a spurt of smoke, which blew away to reveal the gun a wreck and its crew gone.

"Do it again, Jackson, do it again!" prayed Gunn, gripping the bridge-rail with both hands.

Bang! Another miss, and a crash as a shell ripped through the wheel-house aft.

"Only two more shots," groaned Gunn. He set his teeth and steered even closer to the submarine, putting the thought of torpedoes away from him with an effort. A green sea swept the German from stem to stern, one man of the bow-gun's crew went overboard with a despairing yell, and the other was swept aft against the conning-tower, where he hung limp over a life-line until dragged up by the men above.

"*Now* you've got 'em!" shrieked Gunn. "Take your time, Jackson, an' aim steady!"

Bang! and a simultaneous yell from all on deck, for the shell had struck the submarine

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low down forward, and the jagged hole in her plating was clearly visible. It was a telling hit, and even Gunn did not swear when the last shot missed.

"She's diving!" shouted Scott, and it was true. Without waiting to house the guns and clear away the deck-hamper, the men on the conning-tower had disappeared, the hatch-cover fell with a clang, and in thirty seconds all that was to be seen of the submarine was her periscope, sliding through the water with a white wave boiling round its foot.

"Now we're in for it!" said Bell, who had come on deck, blackened to the eyes, after smothering the fire below.

"Oh, stop your infernal croaking!" yelled Gunn hotly as the helm went over and the ship swung round away from the submarine. "Don't you see that while the blighter's under water we're faster than he is? We're walkin' away from him now!" But nevertheless he kept the ship under helm and steered an erratic course, for he knew that the next item on the programme would be a torpedo, and he meant the *Northern Light* to be out of the way when it arrived. A white streak tore across the water and cut through the ship's wake barely twenty feet from her stern.

"One!" said Gunn, signing to the helmsman, and the ship swung to port on another curve. A second white streak of bubbles tore along the ship's side a bare boat's length from her plates.

"Two!" said Gunn. "Wonder how many he'll waste on us? We can keep this up all day. Port—hard over!" The ship swept round to starboard and all hands waited anxiously with their eyes riveted on the ominous black periscope, which again curved towards them half-a-mile away. But the old *Northern Light*, driven at top speed for nearly two hours, was nearing the end of her tether.

"She can't stand this racket much longer!" called McPhail, the Chief Engineer, through the speaking-tube. "I've had the water runnin' on all bearin's for half-an-hour, an' they're gettin' hotter. We'll have to slow her down, Gunn."

"If you slow down you'll get a torpedo in the middle of your bloomin' engines," bawled Gunn down the tube. "Keep her goin'."

He looked anxiously at the submarine, which fired no more torpedoes, but manœuvred ceaselessly for an opening, while the ship turned and twisted like an eel to evade her.

"I've got to stop her, Gunn," yelled the Chief. "Two main bearin's are as hot as fire, an' the white-metal's runnin' like oil."

"Ease her to eight knots, then," said Gunn with a groan. "But if you stop her I'll murder you!" He knew the risk, but worse things than hot bearings threatened.

The end came swiftly. A shuddering, grating sound from below, a crash, and the hissing of steam, and the engines stopped unbidden.

"High-pressure eccentric seized an' tied up the valve-gear in a knot," said the Chief, appearing on the bridge, flushed and slightly scalded, but calm, as behoved a man from Dundee. "My puir engines are juist a scrap-heap. What's to do now?"

"Wait for the torpedo," said Gunn grimly, as the ship lost her way and stopped, and every man held his breath as he waited. There was a concussion that knocked them sprawling across the bridge, a whirl of stifling yellow smoke, and a hail of splinters. The ship shook to her keel, groaning like a living thing, and began to settle down by the stern. The torpedo had struck her aft of the engine-room—luckily the explosives had been stowed forward, or she would have been scattered in fragments over a square mile of sea—and it was obvious to the meanest intelligence that she was bound for the bottom without delay.

"Anyone hurt?" shouted Gunn. But the gun-crew had come forward after firing their last shot, and the half-boiled engine-room crowd had come on deck with the firemen when the engines stopped, so there were no casualties. Gunn bolted to the chart-room for the ship's papers, and since he was a man of foresight and resource, he took his revolver from a drawer and filled a pocket with cartridges before he left. There were only two serviceable boats, but they accommodated all hands with a little crowding, and every man was clear of the ship before the poop-rail was under water. The *Northern Light* stood not on the order of her going; she slid out of sight as if Davy Jones himself were drawing her down. There was a muffled explosion as the water reached her fires; her rusty bows pointed mournfully skyward for a moment, and then she was gone.

"What price the 'Nelson touch' now?" said Bell after a silence, and Gunn let drive at him with a horny fist, and, catching him unawares, knocked him overboard.

"That'll do you!" he said wrathfully as the second mate was dragged aboard by the sniggering crew, looking very like a drowned rat. "Another word, an' I'll lay you out with a boat-stretcher!" And Bell, for all his size, was so taken aback by his unexpected cold bath that he shut up like a clam and said no more.

"Gunn, ahoy!" hailed Scott, bringing

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The hatch-cover was raised from below and fell back on the desk, and a burly German seaman climbed out. Gunn's revolver-butt descended on his head. [*Page 198, col. 3.*]

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his boat alongside. "Where do we steer for?"

"Nowhere!" said the indomitable Gunn. "We're going to wait right here for that blanky submarine. Jackson put a neat little hole in her, an' she'll be comin' up soon."

"Oh, they'll have plugged it long ago. Man alive, you don't think they'd pick us up?"

"If they can plug that hole tight against a twenty-foot head of water, I'll give 'em best," said Gunn. "Oh, they'll come up all right, unless they prefer to stay below for keeps. And as for pickin' us up, I won't trouble 'em. As soon as they come up an' open their hatches, I'm goin' to board 'em."

The crew opened their eyes at this bombshell, and Scott whistled shrilly.

"'The Nelson touch,' that's what I mean," said Gunn maliciously. "An' if any man hangs back, I'll drill a forty-five hole in him with this!" He produced his big Colt and cocked it with a suggestive click.

"All I'm afraid of is that they'll rise too far off for us to reach 'em," said the skipper. "When I give the word, Scott, follow me as close as you know how. It's up the conning-tower an' down the hatch like greased lightning for every man, an' if anyone dallies he'll be thrown overboard."

"Holy Smoke, I believe the beggar means it!" exclaimed Scott under his breath, and before any man could protest, the mad adventure was thrust upon them.

"Crikey! 'Ere she comes!" yelled a fireman.

Not two cables' length away the periscope was cleaving the blue water towards them and rising as it came. Then the conning-tower broke the surface in a whirl of white water, and her low, wet bows appeared. Gunn's surmise had been correct. The submarine's crew had failed to plug the shot-hole effectually; her Commander had been compelled to bring her back to the surface, and was uncommonly glad to get there, for several tons of water which had not entered into her designer's calculations were washing about among her batteries, and her crew were wet and unhappy.

"She's slowing! We've got her!" roared Gunn, standing up in the stern-sheets and shoving the tiller over. "Give way all!"

And the crew dug out like a 'Varsity eight. They were very much afraid, but they were British to a man—and they had seen their ship sunk by a German torpedo, and longed intensely for revenge.

As the slowing submarine surged past, Jackson, in the bows, took a turn of the painter round a stanchion and made it fast, Scott's boat hooked on astern, and in ten seconds the whole crowd were on the submarine's narrow, slippery deck, hanging desperately to any hand-hold they could find.

"After me, Bell an' Jackson," said Gunn in a low voice, and the three climbed cautiously up the steps that led to the tiny railed platform on top of the conning-tower, and dodged behind the hatch just in time. The hatch-cover was raised from below and fell back on the deck, and a burly German seaman climbed out. Gunn's revolver-butt descended on his head, and Bell and Jackson caught him as he reeled and laid him senseless on the deck.

Gunn drew a long breath and jumped down the hatchway, squarely on top of an ascending German, who fell with an agonised yell on the next below him. The two men rolled to the bottom of the ladder, where they upset three more who were waiting to ascend, and Gunn landed on his hands and knees, squarely in the middle of the struggling and vociferous pile, and rolled off on to the deck, just as Bell and Jackson arrived with two separate and distinct thuds.

He got to his feet in time to meet the rush of the German Commander, who had been standing at the periscope. The German drew a big Mauser pistol as he came, but Gunn launched himself at the man's legs and brought him down in a heap. Then he tapped him on the head with his pistol-butt, and performed the same kindly office for the five prostrate Germans at the foot of the ladder. The crew came running from forward and aft, but already Gunn's men were dropping down the ladder, and in ten seconds they were in the thick of the prettiest fight a man could hope to see.

Surprise is a great tactical advantage in any battle, and the British crew possessed that advantage in full measure. Before the Germans could rally, Gunn's men had broken many heads with their boat-stretchers, and had cleared the central compartment of the submarine.

The German crew, despite their losses, still outnumbered the men of the *Northern Light*, but they were weakened and enervated by many weeks of cruising, and they were neither trained nor equipped for hand-to-hand fighting. They had torpedoes enough to sink a battle-squadron, but torpedoes are singularly ill-adapted for hand-to-hand fighting! There were rifles and pistols on board, but these were locked in an arm-rack in the central compartment, from which the rightful owners had been driven at the first rush.

But it was a long-drawn battle. Even the

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third engineer, a man of peace and of few inches, had found a seven-eighths spanner, and was fighting like a Berserk; McPhail was making terrible play with a pinch-bar, and the second was rolling over and over on the floor with the German Engineer-Officer in a whirl of limbs and mixed language.

The Germans were the first to tire of this game, and in ten minutes all who could stand had been driven right aft against the after-bulkhead and compelled to surrender. They were tied hand and foot with the firemen's sweat-rags and such odds and ends of rope as could be found, and the victorious engineers led their men forward towards the roar of battle that echoed from the fore-compartment. Amidships they found Scott, with an ugly cut on his head, sitting on the German Commander, from whom flowed a steady stream of language that would not bear translation.

"The blighter tried to open the valves an' sink the blooming ship," shouted Scott above the din. "Hold him, someone, while I tie him up."

They bound him scientifically, left a man to watch him, and hurried towards a steel door through which echoed Gunn's bull-voice and the intermittent crash of his revolver, the bo'sun's bellow, and the sound of blows, and a very Babel of tongues. Gunn and his men were hotly engaged in the fore-compartment with the larger half of the German crew, and were hard pressed. But Bell was a host in himself, for he had the skipper's taunts to wipe out. He had no weapon, but he fought with the ferocity of a prize-fighter run amok, dropping a man senseless every time his fist got home.

The forward rush of the engineers turned the scale, and within a minute of their arrival the fight was over. More than half of the Germans were down and out, and the remnant were glad to put up their hands

"Tie up every man that can move!" ordered Gunn, flushed, hard-breathing, and triumphant, and in a little while it was done, and they had leisure at last to draw breath and count their losses. There was not a man who did not bear some mark of the encounter, but none of the British crew had been killed, and that was more than any of them had dared to hope for. Of the Germans, three lay dead among the engines—victims of McPhail's terrible pinch-bar. Gunn had shot two men dead and wounded two more, and some twenty silent figures on the deck bore testimony to the spanner-play of the engine-room crowd and the power of Bell's fists. In truth it was a famous victory.

"Now," said Gunn, when the last able-bodied German had been bound, and they had given such attention as they could to the wounded, and, finally, patched the shot-hole, which had delivered the submarine into their hands, "d'ye think you could get her under way, Mac?"

"I'm no hand wi' paraffin," said McPhail, putting the last touches to a bandage on his hand, which had been torn by the ragged edge of the shot-hole. "I'll handle anything that steams, but the scent-sprinkling abortions fra Krupp's that the Germans misca' engines are no job for a Scot, an' my boys have juist been tellin' me the same. An', like as not, ye'd run her under if ye tried to navigate her *de novo*, in a manner o' speakin'. If ye'll no' trust the lave o' the Germans to navigate her for ye, we maun bide here an' wait for a tow."

"I wouldn't trust 'em," said Gunn. "They might sink her—blowed if I wouldn't do it myself if I was in their places. We'll just stop here an' wait for a patrol to turn up—and, by thunder, we must hoist a white flag, or if a warship sights us we shall be like Barney's Bull."

Lieutenant-Commander Gerald Mostyn Druitt, of His Majesty's destroyer *Scamander*, steadied his glasses on the reeling bridge-rail of his ship and looked long and carefully, for after six barren weeks of patrolling he found it difficult to believe his eyes. It was a veritable Hun submarine, motionless, and flying a white flag! It was a flag of curious cut, but its colour was unmistakable. He let out a kind of war-whoop, ordered "action stations" in a strangled falsetto, and prayed into the engine-room voice-pipe for the fullest of full speed. Fifteen minutes later, the destroyer, entirely ready for business, slid alongside the submarine with her engines going astern, while two seamen-gunners pointed as many twelve-pounders at the most vulnerable portions of her hull. Then the Lieutenant-Commander received the shock of his life. An assortment of battered and bandaged ruffians were smoking on the conning-tower, and one of these detached himself from the group and hailed the destroyer through a crumpled megaphone.

"D'you mind turning those guns the other way, sir?" boomed the voice of the one and only Gunn. "They might go off."

"What the Hades are you?" hailed the paralysed Lieutenant-Commander.

"I *was* the skipper of the *Northern Light*," said Gunn blandly. "At present I'm in temporary command of Submarine U99, which we captured two hours ago. She's got a shot-hole clean through her, six dead Germans an' about forty pretty sore ones

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under hatches, an' I'd be thankful for a tow."

The Commander gazed helplessly at the white flag—it was one of the German Commander's shirts—which fluttered from the end of the periscope, and back again at the bruised and filthy Gunn.

"Well, I'm——," he said and stuck on a dead centre. But the destroyer's crew, who were crowding the port rail, let out a wild cheer that brought an awkward lump into Gunn's throat, and he coughed huskily and spat into the sea.

"I take it all back!" said Bell in the wardroom of the destroyer as they were pounding away for Malta with the captured submarine in tow. The destroyer's officers had received the victors with open arms, and had given lavishly of their best, and Homeric and well lubricated was the meal they had put away.

"I take back every blessed word I ever said about the 'Nelson touch,'" said Bell, and in token of good faith—or it may have been the wardroom port—a tear glistened in his penitent eye. "You're a bub-bub-bloomin' hero, an' Scott here agrees with me!"

Scott agreed, and so did the three engineers. The destroyer's second in command, who was acting host since his chief was on the bridge, requested explanations, and he got them in full measure. Then the officers of the deceased *Northern Light* lifted their voices in song, and informed Gunn in various keys and uncertain tempo that he was a jolly good fellow.

"Tha—that's all right, you chaps," said Gunn, getting on his feet with some slight difficulty—it may have been due to the motion of the ship. "I suppose I ought take back what I said about your nerve, Bell—you fought like a whole bagful of bulldogs, an' my hat's off to you. An' now, you two, you owe me a month's pay each."

"I admit it freely," said Bell, "an' you earned it, too."

'Not so fast," said the hard-headed Scott. "Gunn, I own we were wrong an' we've lost our bet, but don't you forget that you owe us a month's pay each for gettin' you out of gaol at Genoa. I think we'll call it square, old hoss."

But what Gunn said in reply cannot be handed down to posterity.

THE DIFFERENCE.

When 'e was jest in trainin', safe and sound on this 'ere side,
A-gettin' fit to answer England's call,
I loved to see 'im marchin' with 'is easy, swingin' stride,
A-steppin' out so milit'ry an' tall.
An' when the drums was beatin' an' the folks was grinnin' wide,
A-yellin' cheers as loud as they could bawl,
I shouted "God save England!" with me 'eart chock-full o' pride,
An' only saw the glory of it all.

But now 'e's over there, with shells a-flyin' round 'is ears,
A-riskin' of 'is precious life an' limb,
Some'ow, it's more the firin' than the shoutin' that I hears,
An' glory in the battle-glare grows dim;
An' when the band's a-playin', an' the air is thick with cheers—
Me throat all 'usky an' me eyes a-brim—
I whispers "God save England!" with me 'eart all full o' tears—
"An' while You're savin' 'Er, take care of *'im!*"

A. P.

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My Lady's Wardrobe.

By Mary Marsh.

All women long to be well dressed. In the following article a well-known beauty expert explains that money plays a comparatively small part in this achievement, careful study of type and harmony of colour being the secrets of successful dressing.

"Harmony of colour is the secret of successful dressing," announced the man who made his living teaching the secrets of beauty to plain women. But the woman he now found himself face to face with was not plain. "Though she is countrified she is pretty," he had to acknowledge to himself, adding as an afterthought, "or she would be pretty if only she'd give herself a chance and wear clothes that she adorns instead of those that so palpably adorn her. Considering she is so short, what induced her to wrap herself up in a sable coat bristling with tails?"

With equal disfavour he contemplated her broad ermine stole tinged with dirt, while a red velvet gown peeping beneath the hem of her coat and matching a cartwheel hat poised unsuccessfully at the back of her golden hair gave him a sense of nausea that reflected itself in his face.

The girl was quick to perceive his disapproval.

"That coat cost something over seven hundred guineas," she announced with an air of bravado.

"It's seven thousand pities that you did not save six hundred of them and buy a pony or a caracul instead," he burst out impetuously; "it would have looked infinitely better with your hair. And oh, that hat! Whatever made you choose red of all colours, when half the fur that could be so well dispensed with in the hem of your coat would have made the most adorable toque? Nothing looks better than a close-fitting sable hat crowning fair hair—always remembering that furs should only be worn on a really cold day, and that a sable hat should be allied to a brown costume to make the colour scheme complete."

"But red is my colour. Everyone tells me it is so becoming," protested the girl.

"Believe me," he said, "red is the one colour you should leave severely alone. Think of all the beautiful blondes immortalised as the ideal type of English beauty. Which of them, I ask you, was ever clothed in red? Pure white of a diaphanous texture should clothe the blonde, relieved by a faint shade of blue that emphasises her fairness and calls attention to the tone of her eyes, which should be as bright a shade as your own."

The little bow that emphasised the compliment did much to soothe his client's ruffled feelings.

"If I'd been with you when you were spending a fortune on furs, you'd have bought white fox instead of ermine—pure white fox, which, by the way, should be kept

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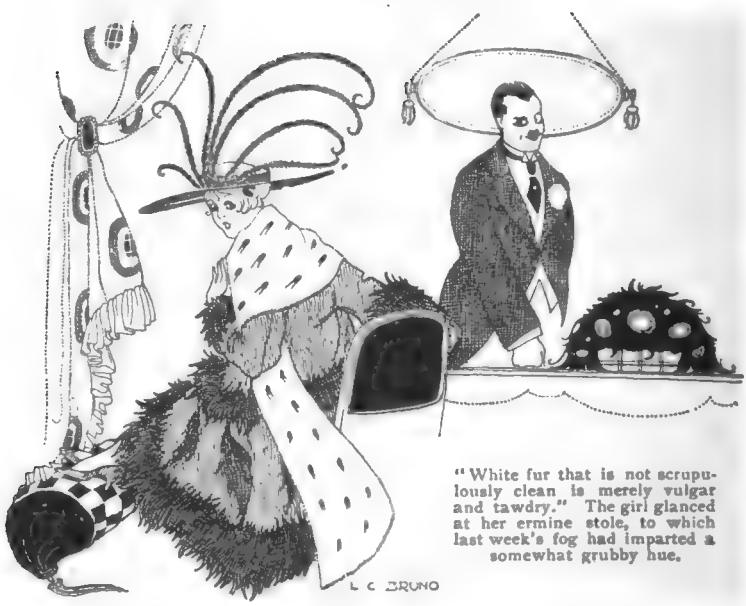

"White fur that is not scrupulously clean is merely vulgar and tawdry." The girl glanced at her ermine stole, to which last week's fog had imparted a somewhat grubby hue.

scrupulously clean." His tones were level, but so convincing that in the girl's eyes her ermine stole took on a grubbier hue than that imparted by last week's fog.

She was feeling so hot and uncomfortable that she began to wish she hadn't chosen to impress him by the wealth of her furs. With a movement something akin to disgust, he noted, she now discarded her gorgeous coat.

But his voice droned on: "White fox or any white fur that is not scrupulously clean is merely vulgar and tawdry; what is more, as you are so fair you would require the clearest white—the cheap variety should never be indulged in by fair people, though it may look passable enough upon a brunette, who need not be so careful about dressing up to the fairness of her skin.

"Now if you'd been a brunette, you'd have had practically any fur to choose from—sealskin, musquash, skunk, mink, ermine, or grey rabbit. In fact, the only pelts brunettes have to avoid are white fox and black astrachan—the one is too light, the other too dense for light brown colouring; while the same applies to caracul and pony skin."

"How about chinchilla?" hazarded his pupil. "I've got a beautiful new set at home."

"Chinchilla is the one fur that suits everyone—save the woman with coal-black hair," said her adviser. "It looks best trimming blue. The most beautiful evening wrap in London at the present moment is of Wedgwood blue velvet, pocketed, cuffed, collared, bound, and buttoned with chinchilla. It is simply crying out for a woman with fair hair to set it off to perfection."

"Where is it to be bought?" Miss Millions' voice sounded greedy as she put the question. But the man was there to sell advice, not to dispose of other people's goods.

"As regards black furs," he continued loftily, treating the interlude of the chinchilla coat as if it had never existed—"Persian lamb, caracul, pony, astrachan, and black fox—it's only a very fair or a very dark woman who can wear really black furs with effect. 'The blacker your hair the blacker your furs'—that's the golden rule. If I were a black-eyed beauty with hair like a raven's wing, I'd wrap myself in Persian lamb; and if I belonged to the smart type, I'd collar such a coat with snow-white fox. Strong contrasts achieve the smartest effects. And that reminds me—it is most important that every woman should first study herself and determine what style she will do best to adopt—whether hers is the classical or the

"Then, as I am short, you wouldn't really advise me to wear a coat of this kind?" she said, picking up her luxurious wrap.

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picturesque or the smart type. What looks more grotesque than a *petite* woman with no pretentions to anything approaching artistic beauty decked out in long, clinging garments cut on artistic lines, unless it be a picturesque type of woman trying to be jaunty and smart? Each belongs to a distinct type, and it would be well if each bore the fact in mind and dressed accordingly."

"Then, as I am short, you wouldn't really advise me to wear a coat of this kind?" said the girl, picking up her luxurious wrap as she spoke and adding sadly: "Yet I chose the one that the man assured me was the best in the shop; certainly it was the most expensive."

"That's where you make such a fatal mistake," groaned her adviser. "Next time you go shopping, do let me beg of you to bear in mind the virtues of simplicity. Believe me, it is the secret of beauty—the one no woman can afford to ignore. If you must wear that coat, I beg you take off all that trimming. As you are short, do remember that all the clothes you select must be chosen with a view to lending additional height and dainty slimness. For your clothes, choose plain, small-patterned material, leaving checks and broad stripes alone.

Skirts and coats should be plain, or else you will look dumpy and dowdy. Big furs, fluffy boas, should all be reserved for the tall folks; the same applies to floppy and picturesque hats with shady brims. The short should choose smart, *chic* millinery with an upward-curving brim for choice, while neat, fairly close-fitting coats help to give height. Over-elaboration is not only the bane of short women, but it has a positively ageing appearance."

"But heavily-trimmed furs are all the fashion now," protested the girl; "they tell you so in every shop."

"Don't believe everything is to be admired because it is the fashion, or you'll never be well-dressed," retorted the man.

"Lunch at any smart restaurant and watch the women who come in, if you doubt the truth of my assertion. For all the money they spend and all the time they waste over dressing, not one out of twenty is fit to grace the back row of a Beauty chorus. Their deportment, their teeth, and the careless way they do their hair, would disqualify them.

"Think over what I have said, and have that coat altered, and then come back in a month's time and I'll give you another pocketful of advice—only do come dressed in shades of brown that tone with your coat from *head* to *heel*," he emphasised.

And as the girl rose to go, she *felt* rather than saw his cruel eyes turned pointedly away from the glaring white uppers of the smart, new patent-leather boots with hanging tasselled laces, that had been her proudest purchase only the day before.

As the girl rose to go, she *felt* rather than saw his cruel eyes turned pointedly away from the glaring white uppers of the smart, new boots with tasselled laces, that she had proudly purchased the day before.

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BALLADE OF A BACHELOR'S PRIVILEGES

(AT CHRISTMAS)

He must buy a ton of bricks;
Sundry dolls (with eyes that close);
Bears and woo'ly lambs for chicks;
Sledges suitable for snows;
Model engines, guns, and bows,
Soldiers, military gear;
Books, a blend of blood and blows—
Christmas comes but once a year!

Fullers' chocolates for Trix;
Something "Rackhamesque" for Rose;
Dora wants a cane like Dick's;
Kate is keen on cameos;
Vi likes verse, and Phyllis prose;
Prue loves opals—SHE'S a dear!

(What price opals? Goodness knows!)
Christmas comes but once a year!

Late on Christmas Eve he ticks
Off the names, then seeks repose;
But as sure as death, at six
He awakens from a doze,
And at once remembers those
Who have been forgotten—queer
Maiden aunts, unsparing foes . . .
Christmas comes but once a year!

Friend, the list expands and grows
Till insolvency is near!
Thank your stars for *quid-pro-quos* . . .
Christmas comes but ONCE a year!

E. L. Roberts.

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PLAYERS AND THEIR PALMS

By Irma Blood.

For most people palmistry has all the charm of the mysterious. In the following article the author, who is an expert on palmistry, graphology, and kindred subjects, gives her impressions of the hands of some of our most popular stage favourites, and lets fall some interesting facts which will enable readers, with the aid of the key hand, to read their own palms and those of their friends.

Photos Bertram Park and Walter & Boys.

Miss Clarice Mayne's is a strong, clever hand, the square shape of the palm and short fingers indicating a practical, capable nature.

There is no doubt, I think, that it is possible to read the past, foretell the future, and delineate character from the lines of the hand. Palmistry is an intensely interesting, far-reaching subject, and one that I have studied for some time with ever-increasing interest.

In reading anyone's hand, the right palm is the one to choose, as that is the hand that is "made" as years go on, while the left hand remains, usually, the same all through life. When I was asked to study the hands of some popular stage favourites I was greatly interested in my task, and now it is over I can safely say that in the eight hands submitted to me I found characteristics and professional work strongly indicated.

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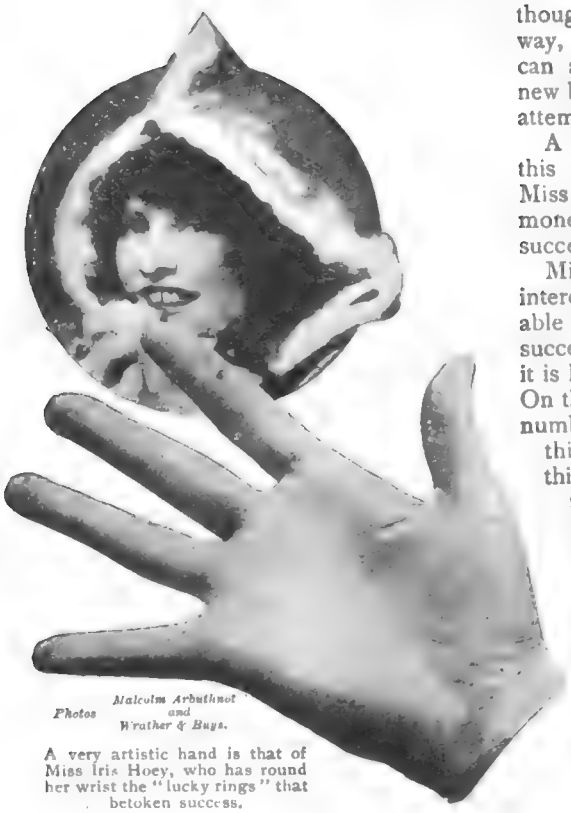

Photos Malcolm Arbuthnot and Wrather & Buys.

A very artistic hand is that of Miss Iris Hoey, who has round her wrist the "lucky rings" that betoken success.

Take Miss Clarice Mayne's hand, for example. Here is a strong, clever hand, which shows an abundance of good ideas, and ability to carry them out. The lines in the palm indicate that Miss Mayne has made and will make a lot of money, but that she should avoid speculations of any kind, as she will always lose over them. Luck seems to be hers all along provided she sticks to her own ideas, and does not allow herself to be too strongly affected by the people surrounding her—a tendency which is clearly indicated.

Many journeys of considerable length appear in her hand; the square shape of her palm and short fingers show that she is very practical, clear-headed, and capable of reasoning things out for herself.

On the other hand, Miss Iris Hoey's palm, in which the head line is joined to the life line, shows lack of confidence and intense shyness, which has developed a certain strain of obstinacy in her nature through her efforts to combat natural diffidence. Her head line is excellent, proving great brain power, and though the whole hand is artistic in every way, there is an indication that Miss Hoey can and will achieve greater success in a new branch of artistic work that she has not attempted so far.

A great capacity for happiness is seen in this hand and also extreme loyalty, while Miss Hoey appears to be unlucky over money matters, although her career is very successful.

Miss Madge Titheradge's hand is full of interest, because it shows the most remarkable amount of success in every way; in fact, success should be hers all through her life. If it is lost at all, it will be through impatience. On the lower outer edge of the hand a great number of journeys may be clearly seen, and this lady is evidently full of courage in big things, though rather inclined to give way to nervous fears in small matters.

Self-confidence is shown by the life line and head line being wide apart at the commencement of each, while the long third finger shows a person born to rule.

Born under the moon, Miss Titheradge is luckiest when she wears blue, yellow, or silver; green is an unlucky

Photos Wrather & Buys.

Success and self-confidence are shown in Miss Madge Titheradge's hand. The long third finger denotes great power of ruling others.

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colour to her, but anything connected with ships or shipping should be fortunate. Full of vitality and self-confidence, her weak spot is nerves, against which she should fight.

One of the strongest hands I have ever seen is Mr. George Robey's expressive, powerful hand. Here is a life line intensely strong, and every sign of splendid health. Great self-confidence is Mr. Robey's, coupled with a kind heart and unusual generosity—shown by the hollow in the centre of his palm. I should say he is an intense idealist in his heart, and the rings so clearly seen round the wrist indicate unusual luck. Laziness, in certain things, is shown by the full contour of the palm, while the curious nails and finger tips indicate extreme perception. That he is strikingly original is proved by the width between his fingers and a capacity for brilliancy in Art—which has not been fully developed—also appears in this remarkable hand.

Mr. Alfred Lester's hand is a complete contrast to Mr. Robey's. A noticeable feature about it is the extreme length of the third and little finger, which means good fortune in whatever he attempts. It is a hand that shows an affectionate, gentle nature and a great love for music. The lucky rings appear on his wrist, and the whole hand shows much good fortune over money matters.

Photos *Hana and Wrather & Buys.*

Mr. George Robey's is an expressive, powerful hand, the width between his fingers indicating extreme originality.

Photos *Foulsham & Banfield and Wrather & Buys.*

Mr Alfred Lester's hand shows a gentle, affectionate nature. He should be lucky over money matters, since the "lucky rings" appear on his wrist.

At about the age of eighteen Mr. Lester must have had a very narrow escape from a serious accident or illness. The "Girdle" of Venus which appears on this hand, starting between the first and second finger in a semicircle and finishing between the third and little finger, is a sign of a very

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Photos Foulsham & Banfield and Wrather & Buys.

An artistic and very sensitive nature is shown by Miss Julia James' beautiful hand, while the unusually long third finger points to success.

affectionate nature and kindness of thought for other people. Among other things, Mr. Lester's hand proves that he is very practical and tidy.

Highly artistic, full of romance, and unusually sensitive—these are my first impressions of Miss Julia James' beautiful hand. This is a hand that is beautiful in shape, and every line in it shows that Art is the true field for its owner's talent. Miss James has done better, monetarily, by following her present career, but Art is her true *métier*. Great logical powers and some obstinacy may be seen; also deep enthusiasm and a sensitive desire not to hurt people, perhaps because her own feelings are so easily hurt. Tidiness is indicated by the size of Miss James' finger-joints, and her long third finger shows success. She will travel a great deal in the future, and there seems a strong indication that she will adopt a new life, in which she will have even greater success than that which has attended her present career.

Mr. Robert Emmett Keane has such a lucky hand—a hand that demonstrates a big amount of success all through his life. Born under Mars, he may find the sea is dangerous to him, and should avoid it if possible. He has a marked capacity for convincing people which helps him enormously, but over money matters he seems decidedly unlucky, in a speculative sense. This is shown by depression in the palm. Rather hasty-tempered, he is ready to forgive, and a large amount of energy finds an outlet in his work.

But of these hands, Miss Laura Cowie's is the only one that is psychic. If she chose, she could have great power in second sight, for she has the long, narrow thumb and tapering fingers of one gifted with psychic force, a gift which is emphasised by the cross between the heart and head lines. Green is a very lucky colour to her, for she was born under Neptune, and her hand proves that she has been and will always be most successful in places that are near the sea. Her vitality is great, and the line of success in her hand is unbroken. Very strong-willed, Miss Cowie is deeply affectionate—but gives her affection whole-heartedly to a few people, and does not waste it indiscriminately on crowds of acquaintances.

Photos Bertram Park and Wrather & Buys.

The depression in the palm of Mr. Robert Emmett Keane indicates bad luck in speculation, though in other matters he is decidedly lucky.

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I should just like to add that I do not know personally the actors and actresses whose hands I have read, and have absolutely no knowledge of their private lives. All I have said comes from the lines and general composition of their hands.

For those who are keen on palmistry on their own account a little general information about the principal lines may be of interest. Short lines under the little finger mean love affairs, while long ones relate to marriage. A drooping marriage line is a sign of widowhood.

A good heart line ought to reach as far as the first finger, or at least between the first two; if it is shorter it indicates a selfish nature. A number of lines falling from this line show fickleness and a tendency towards flirtations. A thin, bare line of heart indicates lack of warm impulse and affection. The line of head, when clear and straight, shows a practical nature; if it is straight in the commencement, and slopes towards the end, it denotes imagination combined with common-sense; a line that slopes through its entire length denotes literary talent. People whose head line curls up at the end will make money by their brains.

Width between the finger and thumb shows honesty, originality, generosity, and broad-mindedness, while wide spaces between the fingers denote originality of ideas and action.

Photos Hugh Cecil and Wrather & Buys.

Miss Laura Cowie's long, narrow thumb and tapering fingers denote psychic force and great power of second sight, which might be developed if she chose.

The thumb should be fairly large; strong will is shown by a long upper joint, while if the lower one is long logic is indicated.

People whose palms have a tendency towards hollowness will be unlucky in money matters, and should take precautions accordingly.

The fate line should run straight up the palm from the wrist; if it is broken it means reverse and loss, unless the ends overlap where broken, when a change in circumstances is denoted. If it is stopped by the line of head, it is a sign that some mistake or blunder will militate against success.

Should it stop abruptly at the line of heart, the chances of success may be destroyed through the affec ions. A fate line rising from a well-marked head line shows that success will come late in life after hard struggles, and through sheer merit and talent.

The absence of a fate line on the palm betokens a monotonous, uneventful life; a fate line joined to the life line at the base of the palm shows a check in the career during the earlier part of life.

With the aid of this map of the hand and the information given in the article, you can get a fair idea of the characteristics of your own hand.

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A RANK OUTSIDER.

By Booth Tarkington.

"And he smiled a kind of sickly smile, and curled up on the floor,
And the subsequent proceedings interested him no more."

Mrs. Baxter stood at the top of the steps of the verandah addressing her son, who listened impatiently and edged himself a little nearer the gate every time he shifted his weight from one foot to the other. "Willie," she said, "either come back and put on some heavier things or take your overcoat."

"My overcoat!" William groaned. "They'd think I was a lunatic carrying an overcoat in August!"

"Not to a picnic," she said.

"Mother, it isn't a picnic; I've told you so a hundred times! You think it's one of those old-fashioned things *you* used to go to—sit on the damp ground and eat sardines with ants all over 'em! This isn't anything like that; we just go out on the tram to this farmhouse and have mid-day dinner, and dance all the afternoon, and have supper, and then come home on the tram. I guess we'd hardly have got up anything as out o' date as a picnic in honour of Miss *Pratt!*"

She stepped into the hall and returned immediately. "Here's your overcoat Willie."

His expression was one of despair.

"They'll think I'm a lunatic and they'll say so before everybody—and I don't blame 'em! Overcoat on a hot day like this! Except me, I don't suppose there was ever anybody lived in the world and got to be seventeen years old and had to carry his silly old overcoat about with him in August—because his mother made him!"

She hung it upon his arm, kissed him, and he departed in a desperate manner.

However, having worn his tragic face for three minutes, he halted before a tobacconist's and permitted his expression to improve as he gazed upon the window display of My Little Sweetheart All Tobacco Cuban Cigarettes, the Package of Twenty for a Shilling. William was not a smoker; that is to say, he had made the usual boyhood experiments, finding them discouraging, and though at times he considered it humorously man-about-town to say to a smoking friend, "Well, *I'll* tackle one o' your old coffin-nails," he had never made a purchase of tobacco in his life. But it struck him now that it would be rather *débonair* to disport himself with a package of Little Sweethearts upon the excursion.

He entered and managed to make his purchase in a matter-of-fact way, as if he were doing something quite unemotional; then he said to the assistant:

"Oh, by the by—ah——"

The assistant stared.

"Well, what else?"

"I mean," said William hurriedly, "I was

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on my way to take this overcoat to—to get something altered at the tailor's for next winter. I was on my way there, but I just noticed I'd only got about six minutes more to get to an important engagement, and I'd like to leave it here and come and get it on my way home this evening."

"All right," said the assistant. "Hang it on that hook. There's one there already, b'longs to your friend, that young Bullitt. He was in here just now and said he wanted to leave his because he hadn't time to take it to be pressed in time for next winter. Then he went on and joined that crowd in Mr. Parcher's garden round the corner. I says, 'I bet your mother made you carry it,' and he says, 'Oh, no. Oh, no,' he says. 'I was goin' to get it pressed!' You can hang yours on the same nail."

It was with a lighter heart that William left his overcoat behind him and stepped out within sight of the party of gaily-dressed young people, about thirty in number, gathered upon the small lawn beside Mr. Parcher's house.

Miss Pratt stood among them in heliotrope and white, her tiny white dog, Flopit, nestling in her arm. She was encircled by girls who were enthusiastically caressing the bored and blinking Flopit, and when William beheld this charming group his breath became eccentric, his knee-caps became strangely cold and convulsive, his neck became hot, and he broke into a light perspiration.

She saw him! The small blonde head and the delirious little fluffy hat above it shimmered a nod to him. Then his mouth fell open unconsciously, and his eyes grew glassy with the intensity of meaning he put into the silent response he sent through the interstices of the intervening groups.

Two friends of his, in the same state, Mr. Johnnie Watson and Mr. Joe Bullitt, met him at the gate and offered him hearty greeting. Weeks ago, when they were first stricken, there had been some bickering and dissension among these three; but all that had passed. It had grown to be a bond uniting them; they were not so much rivals as ardent novices serving a single altar. They were in the last stages.

Johnnie Watson had with him to-day a visitor of his own—a vastly overgrown person of eighteen, who abandoned a fair companion of the moment at Johnnie's beckoning, and came forward as William entered the gate.

"I want to introduce you to two of my most int'mut friends, George," said Johnnie, with the anxious gravity of a person about to do something important yet unfamiliar. "Mr. Baxter, let me introduce my cousin, Mr. Crooper. Mr. Crooper, this is my friend Mr. Baxter." The gentlemen shook hands solemnly, saying, "Very glad to meet you," and Johnnie turned to Joe Bullitt. "Mr. Croo—I mean, Mr. Bullitt, let me introduce my friend, Mr. Crooper—I mean my cousin, Mr. Crooper. Mr. Crooper is a cousin of mine."

"Glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Crooper," said Joe. "I suppose you're a cousin of Johnnie's, then?"

"Yes," said Mr. Crooper, becoming more informal. "Johnnie wrote me to come over for this show, and I thought I might as well come."

He laughed loudly, and the others laughed with the same heartiness.

"Well, that's right," said William, and while they all laughed again, Mr. Crooper struck his cousin a jovial blow upon the back.

"Here, old sport," he cried, "I want to meet that Miss Pratt before we start. The car'll be along pretty soon, and I got her picked out as the girl I'm goin' to sit by."

The laughter of William and Joe Bullitt, intended to express cordiality, suddenly became flaccid and died. The careless loudness with which he had uttered Miss Pratt's name indicated a coarse nature sure to be more than uncongenial to Miss Pratt. Its presence might make the whole occasion distasteful to her—might spoil her day. Both William and Joe Bullitt began to wonder why on earth Johnnie Watson didn't have any more sense than to invite such a big, fat lump of a cousin to this party.

He had the general outwardness of a vast and lumpy child. He was one of those huge, bottle-shaped boys who are always in motion in spite of their cumbersomeness.

His expression was pathetically offensive, the result of his bland confidence in the opinions of a small town whereof his father was the richest inhabitant—and the one thing about him, even more obvious than his chin, his legs, and his spectacular taste in flannels, was his perfect trust that he was as welcome to everyone as he was to his mother. This might some day lead him in the direction of great pain, but on the occasion of the "subscription party" for Miss Pratt, it gave him an advantage.

"Well, don't be in such a hurry," said Johnnie uneasily. "You can meet her when we get out in the country, if I get a chance, George."

"No!" George protested jovially. "You're sad birds over in this town, but look out! When I strike a town it don't take long till they all hear there's something doin'! You know how I am when I get started, Johnnie!"

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Here he turned upon William, tucking his fat arm affectionately through William's thin one. "Here! old Johnnie's so slow, *you* toddle me over and get me fixed up with this Miss Pratt, and I'll tell her you're the real stuff—after we get engaged!"

William extricated his arm, huskily muttering words which were lost in the general outcry, "Car's coming!" The young people poured out through the gate, and as the car stopped, scrambled aboard. For a moment everything was hurried and confused; William struggled anxiously to push through to Miss Pratt and climb up beside her, but Mr. George Crooper made his way through the crowd in a beaming, though bull-like manner, and a fat back in a purple and white blazer flattened William's nose, while ponderous heels damaged William's toes—he was shoved back, and just managed to clamber upon the footboard as the car started. The friendly hand of Joe Bullitt pulled him up to a seat, and William found himself rubbing his nose and sitting between Joe and Johnnie Watson, directly behind the dashing Crooper and Miss Pratt. Mr. Crooper had already taken Flopit upon his lap.

"Dogs are always crazy 'bout me," they heard him say, for his high voice was but too audible above all other sounds. "Dogs and children. I dunno why it is, but they always take to me. My name's George Crooper, Johnnie Watson's cousin. He was tryin' to introduce me before the car came along, but he never got the chance. We'll have to introduce ourselves—the two guests of honour, as it were."

Miss Pratt laughed her silvery laugh, murmured politely, and turned no freezing glance upon her neighbour. Indeed, it seemed that she was far from regarding him with the distaste anticipated by William and Joe Bullitt.

"Flopit look so tunnin'," she was heard to remark, in the child-like way which was her entrancing affectation. "Flopit looks so 'ittle on dray big, 'normous man's lap."

Mr. Crooper laughed deprecatingly.

"He does look kind of small, compared with the man that's got charge of him now! Well, I always was a good deal bigger than the men I meet. I dunno why it is, but I was always kind of quicker, too, as it were—and the strongest in any crowd I ever came across. I'm kind of muscle-bound, I think, but I don't let that interfere with my quickness at all. Take me in a motor now—I got a racin' car at home—and I keep my head better than most people do, as it were. I can kind of handle myself better; I dunno why it is. My brains seem to work better than other people's, that's all it is. I don't mean that I've got more sense, or anything like that; it's just the way my brains work.

"Anyway, I bet you'd have seen something pretty different and a whole lot better if I'd come over to this town in time to get up this party for you!"

"For *us*," Miss Pratt corrected him sunnily. "Bofe strangers—party of us two—all—bofe!" And she gave him one of her looks.

Mr. Crooper's fat hand, as if unconsciously, gave Miss Pratt's delicate shoulder a little pat.

"Well, that's the way with me," he said. "Much as I've been about this world nobody ever tried to have me and pulled it off. That's a decent locket you've got on the end of that chain there."

And again stretching forth his hand, in a proprietor-like way, he began to examine the locket.

Three hot hearts, just behind, pulsated hatred towards him; for Johnnie Watson had perceived his error, and his sentiments were now linked to those of Joe Bullitt and William. The unhappiness of these three helpless spectators was the more poignant because not only were they witnesses of the impression of greatness which George Crooper was obviously producing upon Miss Pratt, but they were unable to prevent themselves from being likewise impressed.

Mr. Crooper pursued his conquering way. He leant more and more toward the magnetic girl. Finally he became interested in a ring she wore, removed it, and tried unsuccessfully to place it upon one of his own fingers.

"I've worn lots o' girls' rings on my watch chain. I let 'em wear mine on a chain or something. They like to do that with me," he said. "I dunno why it is."

At this subtle hint the three unfortunates held their breath. William felt that he must either rise and murder or go mad. But when the exchange of rings was accomplished, his spirit broke, and even resentment oozed away. For a time there was no room in him for anything except misery.

At the farmhouse where the party were to dine, Miss Pratt with joy discovered a harmonium in the parlour, and, seating herself, with all the girls, Flopit, and Mr. George Crooper gathered around her, she played an accompaniment, while George, in a thin tenor of detestable sweetness, sang "I'm Falling in Love with Some One." His performance was rapturously greeted, especially by the accompanist.

"Oh, wunnerfulest Untle Georgiecums!" she cried, for that was now the gentleman's

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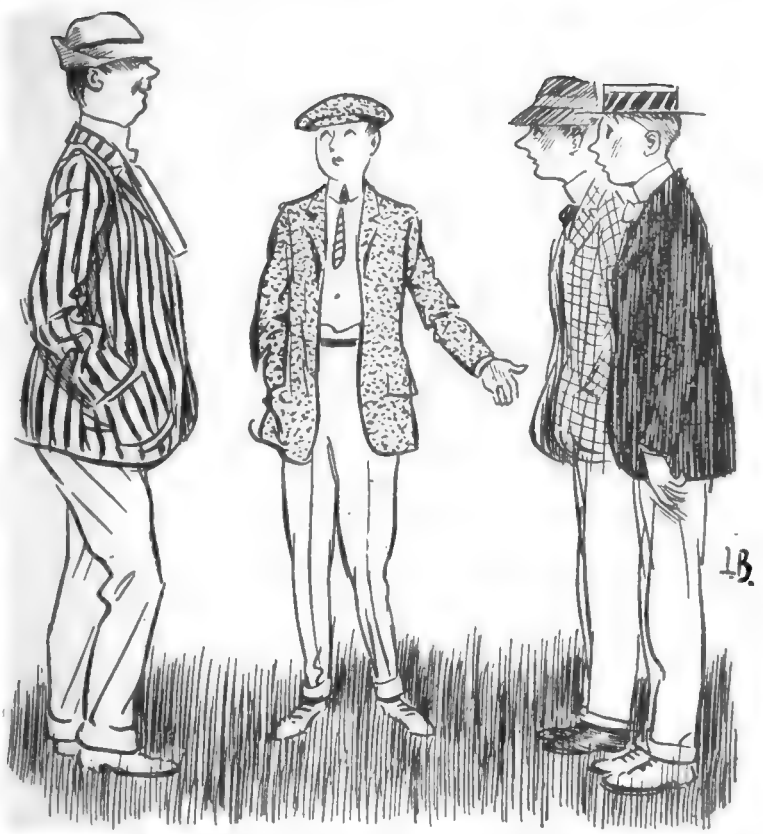
name. "If Johnnie McCormack hear Untle Georgiecums he go shoot umself dead, bang!" She looked round to where three figures hovered morosely in the rear.

"Tum on, sin' chorus, Big Bruvva Josie Joe, Johnnie Jump-up, an' Ickle Boy Baxter! All over adain, Untle Georgiecums! Boys an' dirls all sin' chorus. Tummence!"

And so the heart-rending performance continued, until an announcement by Wallace Banks, the altruistic and perspiring youth who had charge of the subscription list for the party, and the consequent collection of cash. This entitled Wallace to look haggard and to act as master of ceremonies. He mounted a chair.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he bellowed, "I want to say—that is—ah—I am requested to announce that before dinner we're all supposed to take a walk round the farm and look at things, as this is supposed to be a kind of a model farm, or supposed to be something like that. There's a lady named Anna going to show us round. She's out in the yard waiting, so please follow her to inspect the farm."



"I want to introduce you to two of my most int'mut friends, George," said Johnnie. . . . "Mr. Baxter, let me introduce my cousin, Mr. Crooper." [*Page* 211, *col.* 1.]

To inspect a farm was probably the least of William's desires; he wished only to die in some quiet spot and to have Miss Pratt told about it in words that would show her what she had thrown away. But he followed with the others, in the wake of the lady named Anna, and as they stood in the cavernous hollow of the great barn he found his condition suddenly improved.

Miss Pratt turned to him unexpectedly and placed Flopit in his arms. "Keep peshus Flopit cosy," she whispered. "Flopit love ole friends best!"

William's heart leapt, while a joyous warmth spread all over him. And though the execrable George immediately propelled Miss Pratt forward—by her elbow—to hear the descriptive remarks of the lady named Anna, William's soul remained uplifted and entranced. She had not said "like"; she had said, "Flopit *love* ole friends best!"

It was with no little surprise, when the party came out of the barn, that William beheld Miss Pratt, not walking at his side, but, on the contrary, sitting too cosily with George Crooper upon a fallen tree at the edge of a peach orchard just beyond the barnyard. It was Miss Parcher who had been walking beside him, for the truant couple had made their escape at the beginning of the lady's discourse.

In vain William murmured to himself, "Flopit love ole friends best." Purple and black again descended upon his soul, for he could not disguise from himself the fact that George had flitted with the lady, while he, wretched William, had been permitted to take care of the dog!

A spark of dignity still burnt within him. He strode to the barnyard fence, and, leaning over it, dropped Flopit rather brusquely at his mistress' feet. Then, without a word—even without a look—William walked

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haughtily away, continuing his stern progress straight through the barnyard gate, and thence onward until he found himself in solitude upon the far side of a cow-house, where his hauteur vanished.

Here, in the shade of a great walnut tree which sheltered the little building, he gave way—not to tears, certainly, but to faint murmurings and little heavings under impulses as ancient as young love itself. His final mood was one of beautiful resignation with a bite in it; that is, he nobly gave her up to George and added irresistibly that George was a big fat noodle! William saw himself a sad, gentle old bachelor at the family fireside, sometimes making the sacrifice of his reputation so that *she* and the children might never know the truth about George—and he gave himself the solace of a fierce scene or two with George: "Remember, it is for them, not you—you *thing!*"

A whiskered head on the end of a long, corrugated red neck protruded from the cow-house door.

"What say?" it inquired huskily.

"Nun-nothing!" stammered William.

Eyes above whiskers became fierce. "You take your feet off that milk bucket. This is a sanitary farm. Ain't you got any more sense'n to go an'——"

But William had abruptly removed his foot and departed.

He found the party noisily established in the farmhouse at two long tables piled with bucolic viands already being violently depleted. Johnnie Watson had kept a chair beside himself vacant for William. Johnnie was in no frame of mind to sit beside any "chattering girl," and he had protected himself by Joe Bullitt upon his right and the empty seat upon his left. William took it, and gazed upon the nearer foods with a slight renewal of animation.

He began to eat; he continued to eat; in fact, he did well. So did his two comrades. Not that the melancholy of these three was dispersed; far from it! With ineffaceable gloom they ate chicken, both white meat and dark, fried potatoes and green peas and beans; they ate preserved peaches and preserved apricots and preserved pears; they ate apple sauce and apple pie. They ate pickles, they ate pickled tomatoes, also pickled onions.

At that they were no rivals to George Crooper, who was a real eater. Love had not made his appetite ethereal to-day, and even the attending lady named Anna felt some apprehension, though she was accustomed to the prodigies performed in this line by the robust hinds on the farm. George laid waste his section of the table, and from the beginning he allowed himself scarce time to say, "I dunno why it is." The pretty companion at his side at first gazed dumbfounded; then, with growing enthusiasm for what promised to be a really magnificent performance, she began to utter little ejaculations of wonder and admiration. With this music in his ears, George outdid himself. He ate when he had eaten more than he needed; he ate long after everyone understood why he was so vast; he ate on and on sheerly as a flourish—as a spectacle.

When he did stop it was abruptly, and he and Miss Pratt came out of the house together rather quietly, joining one of the groups of young people chatting with after-dinner languor under the trees. However, Mr. Crooper began to revive presently, in the sweet air of outdoors, and observing some of the more dashing gentlemen lighting cigarettes, he was moved to laughter. He had not smoked since his childhood — having then been bound till he was twenty-one with a pledge of gold—and he feared that these smoking youths might feel themselves superior. Worse, Miss Pratt might be impressed. Therefore he laughed in scorn, saying:

"Burnin' up rubbish about here, I expect!" He sniffed searchingly. "Somebody's set some old rags on fire." Then, as in discovery, he cried, "Oh, no, only cigarettes!"

Miss Pratt, that tactful girl, counted four smokers in the group about her, and only one abstainer, George. She at once defended the smokers, for it is to be feared that the numbers always had weight with her.

"Oh, but cigarettes is lubly smell!" she said. "Untle Georgiecums may be too 'ittle boys for smokings!"

This archness was greeted loudly by the smokers, and Mr. Crooper was put upon his mettle. He spoke too quickly to consider whether or not the facts justified his assertion. "Me? I don't smoke paper and carpets. I smoke cigars!"

He had created the right impression, for Miss Pratt clapped her hands. "Oh, 'plendid! Light one, Untle Georgiecums! Light one ever-'n'ever so quick! Peshus Flopit an' me we want see dray, big, 'normous man smoke dray, big, 'normous cigar!"

William and Johnnie Watson, who had been hovering morbidly, unable to resist the lodestone, came nearer, Johnnie being just in time to hear his cousin's reply.

"I—I forgot my cigar-case."

Johnnie's expression became one of biting scepticism. "What are you talkin' about, George? Didn't you promise Uncle George you'd never smoke till you're of age, and Uncle George said he'd give you a hundred pounds on your twenty-first birthday? What did you say about your 'cigar-case'?"

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George felt that he was in a tight place, and the lovely eyes of Miss Pratt turned upon him questioningly. He could not flush, for he was already so pink after his exploits with unnecessary nutriment that more pinkness was impossible. He saw that the only safety for him lay in boisterous prevarication.

"A hundred pounds!" he laughed loudly. "I thought that was a lot of money when I was ten years old! It didn't stand in *my* way very long, though! Good old George wanted his smoke, and he got it! I've been smokin' cigars I dunno how long! I only wish I had some with me, because I miss them after a meal. I'd give a good deal for something to smoke now! I don't mean cigarettes; I don't want any paper—I want something that's all tobacco!"

William's pale, sad face showed a hint of colour. With a pang he remembered the package of My Little Sweetheart All Tobacco Cuban Cigarettes (the packet of twenty for a shilling) which still reposed, untouched, in the breast pocket of his coat.

William brought forth the package of My Little Sweetheart All Tobacco Cuban Cigarettes, and placed it in the large hand of George Crooper. And this was a noble act, for William believed that George really wished to smoke.

"Here," he said, "take these; they're all tobacco. I'm going to give up smoking anyway."

Then he went away and sat alone upon the fence.

"Light one, light one!" cried Miss Pratt. "Ev'ybody mus' be happy, an' dray, big, 'normous man tan't be happy 'less he have his nice tobatto smote. Light it, light it!"

George drew as deep a breath as his diaphragm, strangely oppressed since dinner, would permit, and then bravely lit a Little Sweetheart. There must have been some valiant blood in him, for, as he exhaled the smoke, he covered a slight choking by exclaiming loudly, "*That's* good! That's the stuff! That's what I was lookin' for!"

Miss Pratt was entranced. "Oh, 'plendid!" she cried, watching him with fascinated eyes. "Now take dray, big, 'normous puffs! Take dray, big, '*normous* puffs!"

George took great, big, enormous puffs.

She declared that she loved to watch men smoke, and the boy's heart, as he sat on the distant fence, was wrung and wrung again by the vision of her playful ecstasies. But when William saw her holding what was left of the first Little Sweetheart for George to light a second at its expiring spark, he could not bear it, but dropped from the fence and moped away to be out of sight once more.

This was his darkest hour.

Bitterly he smiled, remembering that Wallace Banks had engaged Italians with harp, violin, and flute, promising great things for dancing on a fresh-clipped lawn—a turf floor being no impediment to seventeen's dancing. He would stay in this lonely orchard; *she* would not miss him.

But though he hated the throbbing music and the sound of the laughing voices that came to him, he could not keep away, and when he reached the lawn where the dancers were, he found Miss Pratt moving rhythmically in the thin grasp of Wallace Banks. Johnnie Watson approached him and spoke in a low tone, tinged with spiteful triumph.

"Well, anyway, old fat George didn't get the first dance with her! She's the guest of honour, and Wallace had a right to it, because he did all the work. He came up to

Miss Pratt was entranced. "Oh, 'plendid!" she cried . . . holding what was left of the first Little Sweetheart for George to light a second at its expiring spark.

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'em, and old fat George couldn't say a thing. Wallace just took her right away from him. George didn't say anything at all, but I s'pose after this dance he'll be rushin' round again and nobody else'll have a chance to get near her the rest of the afternoon. My mother told me I ought to invite him over here, but I had no business to do it—he doesn't know the first principles of how to behave in a town he doesn't live in!"

"Where'd he go?" William asked listlessly, for Mr. Crooper was nowhere in sight.

"I don't know—he just walked off without sayin' anything. But he'll be back, never you fear, and—— what's the matter with Joe?"

Joseph Bullitt had made his appearance at the corner of the house, some distance from where they stood. His face was alert under the impulse of strong excitement, and he beckoned fiercely. "Come here!" And when they had obeyed: "He's at the back of the house by a kind of shed," said Joe. "I think something's wrong. Come on, I'll show him to you."

But behind the house, whither they followed him in vague, strange hope, he checked them.

"*Look there!*" he said.

His pointing finger was not needed. Sounds of paroxysm drew their attention efficiently—sounds most poignant, soul-rending, and lugubrious. William and Johnnie perceived the large person of Mr. Crooper; he was seated upon the ground, his back obliquely propped against the smokehouse, though this attitude was not maintained constantly.

William saw that his Little Sweethearts had been an inspired purchase after all; they had delivered the final tap upon a tottering edifice. George's deeds at dinner had unsettled, but Little Sweethearts had overthrown—and now there was awful work among the ruins.

The distant music came to a stop and Johnnie Watson jumped. He seized each of his companions by a sleeve and spoke eagerly, his eyes glowing with a warm and brotherly light.

"Here!" he cried. "We'd better get back—this looks as if it was goin' to last all afternoon. Joe, you get the next dance with her, and just about the time the music slows up, you dance her round so you can stop right near where Bill will be standin', so Bill can get her quick for the dance after that. Then, Bill, you do the same for me, and I'll do the same for Joe again, and then, Joe, you do it for Bill again, and then Bill for me—and so on. If we go in now and work together we can crowd the rest out, and nobody else will be able to dance with her the whole day! Come on, quick!"

United in purpose, the three ran lightly to the dancing lawn, and Mr. Bullitt was successful, after a little debate, in obtaining the next dance with the lovely guest of the day.

"I did promise big Untle Georgiecums," she said, looking about her.

"Well, I don't think he'll come," said Joe. "That is, I'm pretty sure he won't."

A shade fell upon the exquisite face.

"Naughty Bruvva Josie Joe! The men *always* tum when Lola promises dances. Mustn't be rude!"

"Well——" Joe began, when he was interrupted by the lady named Anna, who spoke to them from the steps of the house. Of the merrymakers they were the nearest.

"That big fellow," said Anna, "who ate so much has been taken to one of the bedrooms. He seemed to need help."

"Does he want a doctor?" Joe asked.

"I'll go and look at him," Johnnie Watson volunteered, running up. "He's my cousin, and I suppose I must take the responsibility."

Miss Pratt paid the individual the tribute of one faintly commiserating glance towards the house. "Well," she said, "if people would rather eat too much than dance!" She meant "dance with *me!*" though she thought it prettier not to say so. "Come on, Bruvva Josie Joe!" she said joyously.

And a little later Johnnie Watson approached her where she stood with a restored and refulgent William, about to begin the succeeding dance. Johnnie dropped into her hand a ring, receiving one in return.

"I thought I'd better *get* it," he said, offering no further explanation.

"You don't think there's any—" William began, and after a pause continued, "any hope—of his getting strong enough to come out and dance after—a while?"

Johnnie shook his head. "None in the world," he said conclusively. "The best we can do for him is to let him entirely alone till after supper, and then ask nobody to sit on the back seat of the car goin' home, so that we can make him comfortable there and let him lie down by himself."

* * * * *

". . . . 'Jav a good time at the party?" the assistant in the corner tobacconist's inquired that evening.

"Fine!" said William, taking his overcoat from the hook where he had left it.

"Howj' like them Little Sweethearts I sold you?"

"*Fine!*" said William earnestly. "They're g eat cigarettes to hand round!"

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PHYLLIS of the FOOTLIGHTS.

By Muriel C. Lindsay.

"Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might:
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight."

I.

Phyllis Lessard, of the Venables Vaudeville Company, crouched over the untidy dressing-table in the close, glaringly-lighted room which she shared with another member of the company, and nursed her aching head. Her throat was sore, her back ached, her eyes were running; in fact, everything pointed to her being in for a severe cold. Thank goodness, the show was nearly over! She wasn't so bad the beginning of the evening, and had managed to get through her turns without exciting remark, but she had grown gradually worse, and now felt that all she was fit for was to lie down and die, and that she loathed Canada, and the prairie town of Balgarnie in particular.

The door was flung open violently, and a short, plump girl with a merry, impudent face bounced in. At the sight of the bowed figure she stopped short and stared aghast.

"Hullo! Phyl," she drawled at last, "ain't you feeling well? What's up? Are you ill?"

Phyllis raised her head and looked at the newcomer with heavy grey eyes.

"I'm afraid I am, Tess," she said hoarsely. "I don't know what's the matter with me. I feel as if the bottom had dropped out of everything, and I don't care what happens."

Tess Delancy looked at her critically before replying.

"Got grippe, I guess," she replied. "Folks say there's a terrible lot of it about the prairie, and you can't expect Balgarnie to be out of the fashion."

"You mean influenza? Oh, I hope not," exclaimed Phyllis. "Perhaps it's only a bad cold, and if I take a hot bath and drink to-night, and stay in bed all to-morrow, I'll be all right by evening."

"H'm. Hope so," was the dry response. "Anyhow, pull yourself together now; we must go on in a minute."

With an effort Phyllis dragged herself to her feet, and followed Tess down the narrow passage leading to the stage. The last encore verse of the concluding song was being sung, and at the end the girls tripped on for the finale. When the curtain was finally lowered, men and girls quickly dispersed to their dressing-rooms to change into street clothes.

Tess was genuinely concerned at Phyllis' condition, and resolved to see her safely into the hotel where they were staying. That someone was cooling his heels outside waiting for her did not trouble her in the least. It was only Ted Morris, the comedian with the alert, ugly face and cheerful temper that no worry or trouble ever succeeded in ruffling.

At last Phyllis was ready, and together they left the dressing-room to find the faithful Ted propping up the wall outside, an expression of resigned long-suffering on his mobile countenance.

"You're a nice one," he complained with twinkling eyes; "make an appointment with a feller an' keep him waiting ages."

"Get along!" retorted Tess equably. "You'll have to wait a bit longer, anyway, for Phyl's really bad, an' I'm just going across to see her tucked in bed with something hot."

"Something hot? Oh, you girls!" protested Ted, pretending to be shocked as he followed them out into the cold night.

It was the end of February, but the prairie was mostly under snow, and it was bitterly cold in Balgarnie's brilliantly lighted streets. Fortunately the hotel the company were in was close to the theatre, so that Phyllis had not far to go, but she was shivering violently when they arrived, and was thankful to tumble into bed and hug a hot bottle. While she waited for the drink Tess was bringing her she wondered drearily what she would do if she were to be really ill. Alone, penniless except for what she earned, she would be in a pretty plight. With the exception of Tess, who seemed to have a genuine liking for her, she had no friends in the company.

The daughter of a rich business man and brought up to every luxury, she was forced to earn her living through his death and loss of fortune from bad investments, and being possessed of a really beautiful and well-trained voice she went to London, where she was taken on as a chorus-girl, with a small part to understudy in a newly-produced light opera. So successful was it that the management decided to send a company to America, and Phyllis was offered one of the minor leading parts to go. The increased salary tempted

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her, and she set out full of hope for the future.

But unfortunately, just as they were beginning to "make good" the war broke out, and immediately all the eligible men of the company returned to enlist, and the piece was taken off. The management sent back those girls who wished to go home, but Phyllis, believing there was more chance for her in America, decided to remain. It was not long before she bitterly regretted her decision. She tried theatre after theatre, only to be told they were full up, and at last was thankful to obtain a "shop" in "Venables' Vaudeville Company," to tour in the States and Canada.

Though the salary was good and the show popular on the road, it was not long before Phyllis was heartily sick of it. The incessant travelling—they seldom stayed more than three nights in any town—got on her nerves, and the free-and-easy, cheap familiarity of the decidedly second-rate artists disgusted her.

When Tess returned with the steaming tumbler Phyllis roused herself from her gloomy meditations, and smiled wanly at the blooming, saucy face.

"Thank you ever so much, Tess," she said gratefully as she sipped the hot lemon. "I don't know why you should be so good to me. I'm sure I've done nothing to deserve it."

"Nonsense!" said Miss Delancy as she prepared to depart; "it's nothing. Only what any girl'd do for another down on her luck."

After a somewhat feverish night Phyllis woke as Tess entered with her breakfast, only to make the discovery that her face, neck, and chest were covered with red spots, and her eyes were puffy. A dreadful foreboding, born of childish reminiscences, seized her, and laying aside the glass she looked at Tess in dismay.

"Oh, Tess," she faltered with a sob—"oh, Tess, I—I believe I've got *measles!*"

"Measles!" Tess backed a little, her healthy face paling. "Measles! Oh, my goodness, it can't be!"

"I'm afraid it is, but I'd better have the doctor and be sure. Will you find a reliable man and ask him to come?"

Tess set off with alacrity, to reappear in a short while with the doctor, a fatherly-looking man with a kindly manner. It needed but a glance at her for him to confirm her suspicions, and her heart sank to zero.

"Oh, it's measles all right; quite a light case, I think," he said briskly; "caught when travelling most probably. Well, the first thing to settle is where you are to go, as they won't have you here, and I'm afraid the hospital won't either. I'll look round and see whom I can find. Meanwhile keep warm, and take nothing but milk. Are you afraid of looking after her?" he asked, turning to Tess, who shook her fuzzy head and declared she was proof against illness, never having had a day's sickness in her life.

Late that afternoon Dr. Stewart reappeared with Tess, whom he had met in the lounge.

"Well, I've tried both hospital and hotel, but neither will take you," he began. "So I 'phoned to an old friend and patient of mine who lives out on the prairie, a Mrs. Sowerby, and she's simply delighted at the idea of having you to nurse. I've a closed motor here, and if your friend will wrap you up in blankets and rugs you will be all right. I'll wait for you downstairs."

With Tess' help Phyllis was soon ready, and with a thick veil covering her disfigured face she tottered to the lift.

"Oh, Phyl!" said Tess hurriedly while they waited. "The boys and girls asked me to tell you how sorry they all were for you, and—and—well, we know you'll be a bit short presently, there's the doctor and your train later, so we whipped round and here's fifty dollars. Old Venny gave me ten, in addition to your salary. He's most upset and sorry for you."

"Ten pounds! Oh, Tess!" Phyllis' lips quivered, and her eyes filled at this unexpected kindness on the part of her fellow-players. "It's too much; I can't take it."

"Rubbish! I've put it in your trunk, see? And I'll tell the others it's all right! They were afraid you might feel bad about taking it."

"Give them all my love and tell them how very grateful I am, and how ashamed," she added, remembering how she had looked down on and despised these same generous-natured people because their ways were not hers.

II.

Phyllis had only a hazy idea afterwards of what happened. She must have been a trifle light-headed that night and the following day, for she was obsessed by the thought that she must get up and dress for the theatre, and implored someone who kept gently pressing her down and covering her up, not to let her be late for the show. But the fever soon left her, the rash died down, and with her return to normal conditions she was able to take stock of her surroundings and her hostess.

She was in a pleasant, airy room furnished with comfortable simplicity, and seated beside the radiator close to the double

["PHYLLIS OF THE FOOTLIGHTS" continued overleaf.]

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windows peacefully knitting was a stoutish, elderly woman with merry blue eyes set in a round face one felt instinctively should have been rosy, but was pale with the pallor of the prairie-dweller, whom intense cold keeps indoors nearly all the winter and extreme heat bleaches in summer. She greeted the girl's convalescence with delight, fussing over her as though she were her daughter; and, feeling thoroughly happy and at home, Phyllis thawed, and shedding her reserve, confided her troubles to her, so that the company would have scarcely recognised their haughty "touch-me-not" fellow-artist in the girl who talked so unrestrainedly about herself and her home life.

And in return Mrs. Sowerby related to Phyllis the history of her family, four boys and two girls, one of whom was married, the other a school teacher in Winnipeg; one boy in France, another training to follow him, one at home running the farm, and the Benjamin still at college. And always her tongue came back to Steve, the eldest, and ran on endlessly about his goodness, the way he took over and managed everything at his father's death.

There was no one to touch Steve according to his mother, and listening to her praise of him a mean little plan unfolded itself in Phyllis' mind. She was sick of her present existence — of fending for herself. She wanted a home, to be taken care of, and, in common or garden language, resolved to set her cap at this Admirable Crichton, and lead him down the orange-blossom path to matrimony. So while Mrs. Sowerby rhapsodised about her son, Phyllis spun mental webs for his entanglement and looked forward with much interest to meeting him.

The first afternoon she was allowed downstairs Mrs. Sowerby and she were beginning tea when there was a brisk footfall outside. The door opened, and a short, powerfully-built young man came in. Looking from his brown, unremarkable face, redeemed from the utterly commonplace by a well-cut, humorous mouth and a pair of observant blue eyes, to his work-coarsened hands, Phyllis supposed he was a hired man or a pupil, and received the shock of her life when Mrs. Sowerby said simply, but in tones of quiet pride: "Miss Lessard, this is Steve."

Steve! Good heavens! This common-looking person the wonderful Steve! Impossible! For the life of her she could not keep the dismay and disappointment from her expressive face and eyes as she held out her hand to meet his vigorous grasp, and mechanically replied to his hearty, "Glad to meet you, Miss Lessard. Hope you're feeling all right again," with faintly murmured thanks.

His voice, in spite of its pronounced Canadian accent, was easy and cultivated; this Phyllis could not deny, and there was something so infectious about its lazy, caressing drawl and his boyish, whole-hearted laugh that insensibly Phyllis thawed a trifle and joined feebly in the merriment.

The meal finished, he rose, saying: "Well, ladies, if you'll excuse me, I'll be off."

Mrs. Sowerby smiled meaningly.

"Going into town?" she asked.

"When you've made an appointment with a girl it's up to you to keep it, isn't it?" he replied, with a humorous glance at Phyllis, whose aloof, grey eyes refused to see it. "Had I known it was to be your first night down, Miss Lessard, I'd have fixed up for another evening."

"Oh, please don't let *me* interfere with your engagements," she returned with icy politeness, her tone implying that his movements were a matter of absolute indifference to her.

But the next evening she received a second shock, and one that materially altered her opinion of him.

It was at the close of the evening meal that Mrs. Sowerby remarked: "If you're not going out to-night, Steve, we might have some music. I'd like Miss Lessard to hear you play. Steve's a fine player, Miss Lessard. He practises most evenings, but was afraid it might worry you while you were ill. You'd like to hear him?"

Phyllis said politely but untruthfully she would, and with an inward shudder resigned herself to a crude vamping of rag-time melodies or "Home, Sweet Home" with long-drawn-out variations.

Pulling open the folding doors and seating himself before the upright grand in the parlour, Steve opened the key-board, and, turning to Phyllis, asked what she'd like.

"Oh, I don't mind—anything," was the indifferent answer; then, as an afterthought, but in reality with malicious intention, she added: "I'm rather fond of Mendelssohn's "Rondo Capricioso."

"That'll stump him," she thought with cruel satisfaction, and looked to see him stammer confused excuses.

But she was disappointed.

"I think I can manage that all right," he said, with a flash of his white teeth, as he brought his hands down on the lovely opening chords.

His execution might be somewhat lacking in places, but his touch was perfect, and he played with great delicacy and feeling. Phyllis listened in an ecstasy of enjoyment, letting the capable brown hands weave a spell about her; and, watching his rapt

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face, she wondered how she ever thought it common or vulgar. Why, oh why, she asked herself in amazement, was he content to live out his life here as an ordinary farmer when, by cultivating his undoubted gift, he might have had the world at his feet?

The Rondo ended, he turned and looked inquiringly at Phyllis.

"Oh, go on," she implored breathlessly. "Don't stop, please don't stop," and without a word he began again, breaking into a little fugitive melody like the sighing of wind in the trees, the soft ripple of baby waves on a warm, sunlit shore.

"Oh, what is that?" asked Phyllis excitedly, as he finished. "I never heard anything like it. Do play it again."

Steve laughed, swinging himself round to face her. They were alone for the moment, Mrs. Sowerby having quietly slipped out on some domestic errand.

"No, it's just a little thing of my own," he said diffidently. "It's—it's meant to be the wheat on the prairie. You know the way it rustles and sighs like the sea when the wind blows over it? You like it?"

"Like it? It's exquisite. I've never heard anything so beautiful. Have you published it? You should. I'd love to have it. But, Mr. Sowerby, why have you hidden your great gift away like this?" she demanded eagerly. "Why haven't you developed it? You might have been one of the foremost pianists of the day if you had. Even now, if you worked hard, it would not be too late."

Steve's face, which had deepened in colour under her generous, impetuous praise, paled again to its normal tan, and into his blue eyes came a look of wistful longing.

"Think so?" he said, his manner betraying nothing of the curious, bitter-sweet elation he felt at her words. "Well, to tell you the truth, Miss Lessard, that's what I once dreamt of being, but—Dad died, and I was the eldest, with the others coming on, and so——" He shrugged his shoulders and smiled, a smile that cut Phyllis to the heart, so eloquently it revealed the hidden tragedy of his life.

"And so you sacrificed your career for them," she said in a low voice. "I think it was splendid of you, simply splendid."

III.

Nearly two months had passed since Phyllis came to the Sowerbys', and though the girl suggested more than once it was time she left them and got something to do, it was eagerly negatived by mother and son, so, nothing loth, she stayed on.

With returning strength came the wish to be useful, and under Mrs. Sowerby's tuition she fed the chickens, learnt to milk, and tried her hand at pastry and cakes, her efforts meeting with unqualified praise from Steve, who declared she bid fair to make a good farmer's wife. The words were lightly enough spoken, but the accompanying glance from his keen blue eyes made Phyllis colour and her heart quicken its beat. She took herself severely to task afterwards for blushing like an idiot at a few words of praise from a common young farmer. One might almost suppose she was falling in love. She checked herself sharply with a half-angry laugh at the idea. All the same, the remembrance of that speaking glance remained, thrilling her anew with its unspoken significance.

And Mrs. Sowerby, watching the sleek, black head so close to the fair English one as they bent over a music score, also remembered, and began to wish she hadn't been so insistent on Phyllis' staying, and resolved to enlighten her without delay as to Steve's matrimonial intentions; so of set purpose she discarded her knitting and began to work on a handsome bed-spread one evening when Steve was absent. As she expected, Phyllis innocently commented on its beauty and the time she must have expended on it.

"Yes," said Mrs. Sowerby, eyeing it complacently, "I really do think it's pretty, and there are a good many solid hours' work put into it, I can tell you. But there! I don't grudge a minute of it, seeing it's for Steve's wife."

There was a moment's silence; then, in a voice she tried to make sound perfectly natural, Phyllis remarked:

"Steve's wife? I—I—had no idea he was engaged."

"Didn't I tell you? Why, yes, he's going to marry Sue Drummond of Balgarnie. They've known each other since they were mites, and it's just the dearest wish of both families to see them married. But of late—I don't mind telling you, my dear, as I know you'll understand—I'm afraid Steve has neglected Sue a little."

For a moment Phyllis' heart seemed to stand still, then bounded on with a violence that made her feel sick and stunned. Then, pulling herself together, she said in a low, constrained voice: "I suppose you mean since I came?"

"Well, yes, dear, I'm afraid it is," replied Mrs. Sowerby, her comely face looking worried. "Not that I'm blaming you, child," she added apologetically. "It's not surprising Steve should be taken with your pretty face, and if it wasn't for Sue I'm not saying but I'd be glad to keep you. As it

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is——' She paused, looking anxiously at Phyllis, who forced herself to meet the questioning gaze as unconcernedly as possible.

"You think I'd better go?" she said bluntly.

"I just hate to hurry you, child, but I do. And if you've made no plans, how would this suit you for a bit?" Diving into a bag, she produced an envelope. "I've had a letter from my sister-in-law in Victoria. Her mother's-help is going and she isn't fixed up yet. She's very kind and pays well, so if you'd like it I'll write about you at once."

"Victoria?" repeated Phyllis blankly. "In—in Australia?"

"No, Vancouver Island. I've been there once, and it's a sweet place," declared Mrs. Sowerby. "I just hate to hurry you, but I think it would be best. And—and—do you think you could act so as to put Steve off you a little?"

"Act?" echoed Phyllis, looking puzzled. "Oh, I see," as the meaning dawned on her, "do a 'David Garrick' turn to disgust him, you mean? Oh, yes, I expect I could."

Presently, declaring she was overcome with sleep, she said good-night and escaped to her room to have it out with herself. It was no use denying it, she had fallen in love with a man who was not free, and whom she'd scornfully snubbed and despised at first as rough and common; and, to make matters worse, she was expected to conduct herself so as to disgust him and stifle in him any budding response.

Then came a fierce moment of revolt. It was asking too much of her. Why shouldn't she stand up for herself and take the goods within reach? Steve cared for her, his eyes, his voice, and many little signs receiving scant attention at the time but full of meaning now, told her he did. Since Sue Drummond wasn't strong enough to hold him she deserved to lose him.

Then, swiftly as it came, the moment passed. What she contemplated was impossible. Mrs. Sowerby trusted her, had, with true prairie hospitality, taken her in when ill and friendless and nursed her as one of her own, asking only in return that Steve be helped to keep faith with his girl. Yes, she would do it, though her own heart broke in the process.

The next evening Phyllis was late for supper, and when she came in excusing herself volubly in a high, affected voice utterly unlike her own clear accents, Steve glanced at her in amazement. For this was a Phyllis he did not know, a Phyllis he had only seen at the theatre—Phyllis of the footlights, in fact—with paint and powder on her face, fair hair extravagantly dressed, and wearing a tawdry, low-cut blouse. After the first glance Steve did not look at her again, but sat very quiet with compressed lips. When the meal was ended she asked permission to smoke from the astounded Mrs. Sowerby, who did not realise for the moment what it all meant, and looked as shocked as Phyllis hoped she would.

"Almost forgotten how to do it," she explained airily to Steve, who watched her with an air of grim disapproval. Mrs. Sowerby, beginning to understand, had discreetly withdrawn. "The company'll think I'm a real muff when I rejoin, won't they?" she giggled.

"You are going back to them?" he queried. "I had thought perhaps you might have cared to stay on the prairie," he added, his eyes unconsciously pleading for him.

She laughed shrilly, and hoped he would not notice how her lips trembled or how close to tears was her mirth.

"Stay on the prairie?" she echoed. "Good heavens, no! Too dull and quiet by a long chalk. All very well for a little while, you know, but that's all."

"Haven't you made up your mind very suddenly?" was the disconcerting query. "Only a few days ago you said how much you liked being here."

"Oh no, I've been thinking it over ever since I got this letter," she hastily interposed, pulling out an envelope with "Venables' Vaudeville Company" sprawling across the top in flaming crimson. It was an old one, but Steve did not know that. "But, you see, I wasn't quite ready; I had to get a few more details."

"Details? Details for what?" he demanded sharply.

"Why, for my new turn, 'Farm Life on the Prairie.' But I've got it all pat now, and I expect I'll make a hit when I show them how we milk the cows, feed the chickens, and encourage the good young man to stay at home——"

"Stop!" Steve rose and came close to her, his face white beneath its tan, his eyes blazing. "Do you mean to say it has all been just make-believe, that you meant nothing by it? That the music and all the rest was just a—a sham?"

For a moment Phyllis quailed. She could not go on with it, her soul sickened and shrank before the disgusted incredulity in his face. Then, pulling herself together, she blew a mouthful of smoke and puffed it impudently at him.

"Why, of course," she replied with a saucy grimace, "every bit. The measles did me a good turn after all. But for them

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I'd have lost the chance of getting up something new. But aren't we growing serious? Let's have some music—a good old rag-time. I'm just sick of those solemn classics."

Seating herself at the piano she dashed into a noisy fox-trot and played violently until the closing of the door told her she was alone.

Then, folding her arms on the back of her chair, she laid her head on them and sat very still for some time. So Mrs. Sowerby found her, and in response to her anxious question as to what was the matter, she raised a ravaged face.

"I've done what you wanted," she said in a low, fierce tone, "and he thinks I'm just the vilest thing on earth. Now, for pity's sake, get me away as soon as you can. I think my heart is broken."

IV.

It seemed strangely quiet and dull at the farm after Phyllis left. There was no music now at nights, nor any cheerful running off for a few hours to the town. Steve seemed content to sit apparently reading, but in reality staring at the stove, his teeth clenched on an empty pipe, a puzzled frown on his brows.

At last Mrs. Sowerby could stand it no longer. One evening, a week or so after Phyllis' departure, she laid down her knitting and looked across at her son, where he sat with a book in his hand, never turning a page.

"Steve," she said, her voice quavering, "Steve, I'm growing an old woman and want young life about me. Won't you bring Sue here as soon as she can be ready?"

Steve laid down his book and looked at her with mild surprise in his eyes.

"Sue?" he echoed. "Why, mother, you don't mean to say you're still harping on that old boy-and-girl foolishness between us? She'll be your daughter-in-law all right, but not *my* wife."

"Why, Steve. . . . You don't say. . . . Is it Frank?" queried Mrs. Sowerby incoherently.

"Why, yes. We decided to be brother and sister-in-law quite a time ago, for Sue, like all the girls, is clean gone on khaki," he replied with a whimsical smile. "There's no chance for us poor civvies nowadays, so I'm afraid, mother, you'll have to give up any idea of *my* marrying."

"But Steve—I thought you and Sue——. You went there so much . . ." faltered Mrs. Sowerby with growing agitation. "Is here someone else?"

"I went just to talk about Frank and her up a little," replied her son. there is someone else. I thought she for me, but I found she was only p g with me, studying me, drawing me out, to use later on the stage. I could hardly have believed it, only she told me so herself," he added grimly.

"Are you speaking of—of Phyllis?" she stammered.

"Why, yes. But what do you know of that, mother?"

And then to his astonishment his mother burst into tears, covering her convulsed face with trembling hands.

"It was my fault," she sobbed. "I made her do it. I saw you were getting fond of her, and I was afraid for Sue. So—so I told her about you two, and asked her to act so as to make you disgusted with her."

"'David Garrick' over again," commented the young man drily.

"Yes, that's what she said," gulped Mrs. Sowerby miserably. "I don't know what she meant, but——"

"David Garrick was an actor who pretended to be drunk to disgust the girl he loved," explained Steve, who knew his theatre, "only there the likeness ends. For he loved the girl, but Phyllis doesn't love me."

"But she does, she does, I know it!" said his mother eagerly, as the remembrance of the girl's ravaged face rose before her. "She said I'd broken her heart."

Steve's face lightened, and he rose, straightening his shoulders like a man discarding a heavy burden.

"That explains everything," he declared. "I couldn't understand it, and I've been worrying all along to account for her sudden change." Then catching sight of his mother's tear-stained cheeks he bent to kiss her. "Don't take it so much to heart, mother," affectionately patting her shoulder; "there's no great harm done, after all. I suppose you know where she is?"

"Yes, with your aunt Lizzie as mother's-help."

"Oh, good old Auntie! I'll invite myself there for a few days very soon. Shall you be glad to have Phyllis back, mother, if she'll come?"

"Yes, indeed. Tell her it's all been a mistake and there's no one I'd wish for better," declared Mrs. Sowerby fervently. "She's a dear girl."

Miss Lessard stepped out of the tramcar and walked down Douglas Street to the Empress Hotel. It was a beautiful June

["PHYLLIS OF THE FOOTLIGHTS" continued overleaf.]

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day and Victoria looked at its best, its broad boulevards and beautiful gardens ablaze with lilacs, chestnuts, and early summer flowers, while everywhere the broom could obtain a footing it flung its golden glory broadcast.

Phyllis had an afternoon off to have tea at the Empress with Tess, now Mrs. Morris and her husband, who, as Tess explained in her letter of invitation, after a brief honeymoon in Victoria, were joining the Vaudeville Company in Seattle. She was anxious for Phyllis to come back to it, and the girl seriously considered it. She was restless and unhappy, though the James Sowerbys were kindness itself to her.

The Morrises met her in the lounge, and after an exuberantly affectionate greeting that at one time would have set her teeth on edge, led the way to the Palm Room, where they had reserved a table near the orchestra. Tess was in the best of spirits, rejoicing in the widest and shortest of wide, short skirts, high, biscuit-coloured boots, short, flaring jacket, and a large sailor hat.

During tea Tess' sharp eyes roamed round the room, and preening herself in the interested, curious glances cast at their table, she finally observed in a loud whisper:

"The man at the table third from this'll know us again. Hasn't taken his eyes off us since he came in."

"Guess it must be your new costume that's fetching him," observed Ted.

"It's certainly — striking," ventured Phyllis.

"Latest from Paris to slip the submarines," declared Tess complacently. "Well, if we've done, let's go and sit in the lounge a bit."

"I think I'll have to be going soon," began Phyllis, looking at her watch.

"Well, if that fellow isn't the limit," said Tess, for as they rose the man who had attracted her attention by his keen scrutiny of their table also rose and quickly followed them. "I believe he's going to speak. *Why, Phyl!*"

"Good-afternoon, Miss Lessard," said a well-known voice at Phyllis' shoulder, and with a gasp she turned to meet Steve Sowerby's keen eyes smiling into hers.

For a moment she went deathly white; there was a singing in her ears, the lounge seemed to swing dizzily round and grow dim. Then as the mist cleared away and things steadied themselves, a lovely colour flooded her cheeks and her eyes were like stars.

"Oh, how d'you do, Mr. Sowerby?" she said confusedly, and to cover her confusion hastily introduced him to the Morrises.

"Quite a surprise your meeting, isn't it?" observed Tess, whose shrewd glance had noticed Phyllis' emotion and drawn certain conclusions from it.

"Not to me," replied Steve. "You see, I arrived by this afternoon's boat and 'phoned to my aunt, who told me Miss Lessard was here. Were you saying something about going back?" he added, turning to Phyllis; "if so, I'll come with you, if I may."

"Be sure and let us know in good time if you're coming, Phyl," said Tess, as Phyllis said goodbye. "We leave on Friday." Then as she watched their departure, "Old Venny'll never see Phyl back in his show," she observed gloomily to Ted.

"No, I fancy she's going to star it in a place of her own," he replied. "Well, if she's as happy as we are, she'll do. Eh?"

In Fort Street Steven hailed a passing taxi.

"There's no hurry," he said to the driver, "take us somewhere quiet. I'll make it worth your while."

"Beacon Hill Park?" suggested the man, and at Steve's nod turned the motor in that direction.

At the summit they left him and found a seat amongst the broom overlooking the Strait. They were quite alone, and might have been miles from anywhere, with the waters blue as the Bay of Naples rippling lazily at their feet, instead of within a stone's-throw of the city.

For some moments Steve sat gazing before him, apparently absorbed by the view, then suddenly turning to Phyllis he said abruptly:

"What do the Morrises want you to do?"

"They want me to go back to the company," she replied, nervously stripping a branch of its golden blooms.

"And are you going?"

"I—I don't know," she faltered.

With a swift movement he reached out and captured her restless hands.

"Phyllis, don't go," he pleaded. "Come back to the prairie with me; we want you so."

"But Sue—your mother told me——" she stammered breathlessly.

"All a mistake. My engagement to Sue never existed save in mother's imagination; she is engaged to my brother Frank. There's only one girl for me if she'll have me. Will you, Phyllis?"

And reading content in her shy eyes he bent and took her into his arms.

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Christmas Greetings and Timely Tips.

ANOTHER WAR-TIME CHRISTMAS.

MAY it be the last! All of us echo that wish, hoping that next year the mistletoe will come into its own again, with the return of the gallant men whose only Christmas this year may be a slice of cold plum pudding consumed in the doubtful sanctuary of a sodden dug-out.

To all of you, whether at the Front, on board our fighting ships, or attending to the home-fires, I raise the glass in good fellowship. Many of you can still look forward to Christmas as a time of merry-making and rejoicing, and without doubt or misgiving I can wish you a happy Christmas. Others there are for whom Christmas has lost all its charm because of those who are gone. To them I extend my homage and sympathy, hoping fervently that the very splendour of their going may combine with the wondrous spirit of Christmas to cheer and comfort.

Because it is a war-time Christmas, because sadness and joy are so inevitably mingled, we want all the brightness we can borrow from outside sources. That is why I wing the Christmas ROYAL on its way, confident of its warm reception. It is a certain cure for the "blues," and I can think of no pleasanter surprise for an exiled soldier or sailor than to see Miss Winifred Barnes smiling up at him from the cover when he opens his parcel or hamper. Remember, the ROYAL is famous for its pretty girls, and the Army and Navy dote on them. An extra copy will only cost you a shilling. The gratitude of our fighting men is cheap at the price.

Don't forget when you have finished with your ROYAL to hand it over the counter at the post-office, along with any other magazines you can spare, for distribution to the troops. You will find full particulars on page 180. The men in hospital and in the trenches look to you to provide them with reading matter. Don't disappoint them, I beg of you!

"SOME" STARS FOR A SHILLING!

While no other Christmas Number can possibly be so good as my own (Cheers—thank you!), I must admit that my revered colleague, the Editor of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE, has produced one that I, myself, should be proud to father. He seems, in fact, to have made a corner in "stars." He has secured the inimitable Bairnsfather as *hors d'œuvre*, and he has netted "Fish," the creator of the delicious "Eve" pictures. Patrick MacGill, George A. Birmingham, E. F. Benson, E. Temple Thurston, Jessie Pope, Lady Sybil Grant, Keble Howard, Dion Clayton Calthrop, Lewis Baumer, and many other clever people also figure on his "bill." And to crown all he winds up with a long complete novel by Edgar Jepson, who first introduced those fascinating flappers Pollyooly and Lady Noggs to a delighted world.

Moral: The Christmas PEARSON'S is something not to be missed, and worth much more than the shilling it will cost you.

A "NOVEL" BILL OF FARE.

Lest I sow the seeds of jealousy in a hitherto peaceful office, I dare not omit to put on record the good fare provided in the Christmas NOVEL. Hardened as I am I could not repress a gasp of wonder and admiration at the list of attractions the Editor has managed to provide for a modest sixpence. If I may take liberties with the words of the historic song,

> You'll never believe me how wonderful they are,

unless you buy a copy to see for yourselves.

William Le Queux, whose splendid stories you have enjoyed in the ROYAL, contributes the first story of a new series dealing with the adventures of an aviator on the track of enemy spies. Barry Pain records the experiences of an inimitable charlady; there is a delightful story in verse by Jessie Pope, and a humorous play well within the scope of amateur actors. Winifred Graham, T. C. Bridges, Mrs. Stanley Wrench, Beatrice Grimshaw, and George Robey also help to make this a record number.

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